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LITTLE BOOKS ON ART

GENERAL EDITOR: CYRIL DAVENPORT

GEORGE ROMNEY

LITTLE BOOKS ON ART

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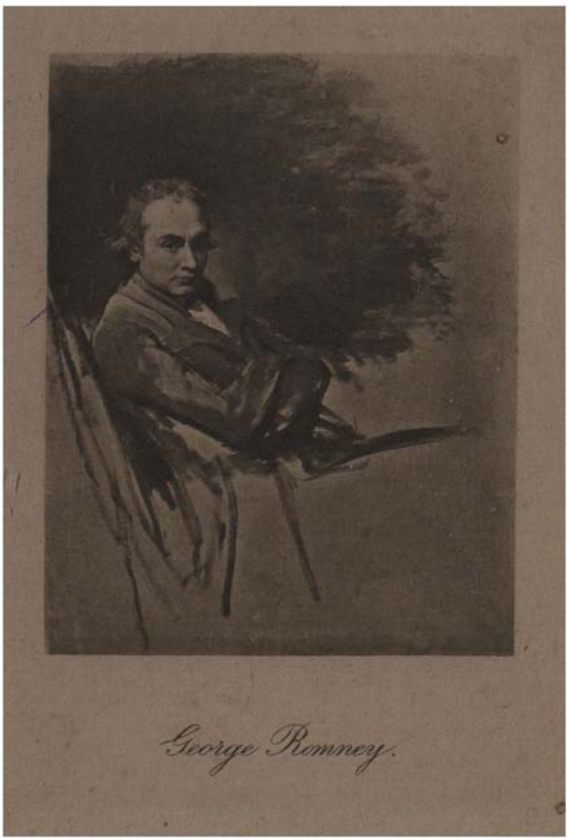

George Romney.

GEORGE ROMNEY

BY

GEORGE PASTON

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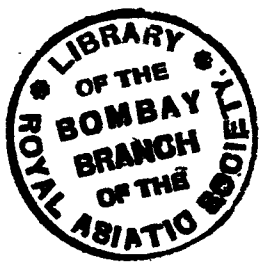

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GEORGE ROMNEY

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

Parentage—Birthplace—Early education—Friendship with Williamson—Apprenticeship to Steele—Illness—Falling in love.

ONE of the minor results of the disturbances in the North of England under the Protectorate was the migration of many families of the smaller yeomanry from their holdings in the agitated districts to regions of greater tranquillity. Among these obscure victims of faction was one George Romney, who moved from the village of Colby, near Appleby, where he owned a small property, to the more peaceful neighbourhood of Dalton-in-Furness. "Honest George," as he was commonly called, married late in life—after he had reached his sixtieth year—but, thanks to his sturdy Cumberland constitution,

he lived to see his children's children, nor was he gathered to his fathers until he had attained the patriarchal age of ninety-six. A younger brother of more adventurous spirit accompanied the army of William III. to Ireland, fought at the Battle of the Boyne, and finally settled in that country, where he held the office of steward to Lord Inchiquin.

"Honest George" left a son, afterwards known as "Honest John," who was remarkable for other qualities than that of honesty, though, for lack of education and opportunity, he never emerged from his native obscurity. John Romney combined in his own person the callings of farmer, carpenter, and cabinet-maker, carrying on, as may be supposed, a very extensive business. A man of mild and placid manners, contemplative in his habits, and of unblemished character, he was distinguished among his neighbours for the versatility of his talents, and more especially for his remarkable inventive faculty. He not only read voraciously, storing his mind with such scientific knowledge as the place and the period afforded, but he gave practical proof of his powers as an architect, an engineer, and an agriculturist, besides displaying incidentally a pretty talent as a wood-

carver, a draughtsman, and a musician. It was John Romney who constructed the engines that pumped the water from the neighbouring mines, invented an iron mould-board for the plough, replaced the heavy clog wheels then in use by spoke wheels, and was the first to utilise shell-fish as a manure for the stiff clay soil. From the making of a fiddle to the building of a house nothing seems to have come amiss to this versatile genius.

John Romney might have become rich and prosperous if he had not been, like most inventors, a bad man of business. He shrank from the disagreeable duty of collecting debts, his guileless simplicity exposed him to fraud, and, so long as he found plenty of congenial employment, he seems to have cared little who took the lion's share of the profits. Of his wife, born Ann Simpson, of Sladebank, Cumberland, we hear little, except that she was a clever, practical woman, who might have been a help to her husband in his business dealings if she had not been fully occupied in bearing and rearing eleven children—ten sons and one daughter. Her family, like that of her husband, belonged to the yeoman class, and her mother, it may be noted, was granddaughter of the Thomas Park who held the

office of High Constable in Furness from 1642 to 1647, and wrote a narrative of the turmoils and commotions that afflicted the district during the period of the Civil War.

In the little farmhouse at Beckside, near Dalton, George Romney, the third son of John, was born on December 26th, 1734, and there he grew up amid ideal surroundings for the development of a poetical imagination and a love of natural beauty. The Romney homestead stood upon a terrace facing the west, and commanding an extensive view of the Irish Sea, while from a hill at the back a wonderful panorama lay unrolled. To the south was the wide Bay of Morecambe, and to the north the estuary of Duddon. On the Cumberland side the high ground was studded with villas and farmhouses, while behind rose the majestic Blackcomb, its lofty head swathed in grey clouds, and in the distance might be seen the pointed summits of Scaw Hill, the Old Man, and Conistone. To the east lay the rich vale of Furness, its woods and meadows encircled by another range of distant mountains.[1] Such were the scenes that daily met the eye of George Romney during the im-

[1] *Life of Romney*, by his son.

pressionable period of his childhood and early youth, scenes that were varied by glowing sunsets, whirling rain-clouds, the wild winds that lashed the sea to fury, and the thunder that reverberated from hill to hill. Small wonder that some of the earliest original works of the future portrait painter, as well as the most ambitious picture of his mature years, should have been inspired by the same subject—a ship wrecked in a stormy sea.

It was well that the boy Romney was a willing pupil of Nature, since he could hardly boast of any other teacher. After the custom of North Country families of the yeoman class, it had been decided that William, the eldest son, should be given every advantage in the way of education, and allowed the opportunity of entering a learned profession. But William, like many other young men of his day, was fired with a passion for travel and adventure, and, after serving his apprenticeship to a firm of merchants in Lancaster, he was sent out to a situation in the West Indies. Another son, James, entered the East India Company's service, and rose to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He is described as—in after life—a man of distinguished demeanour, with a taste for literature, who could write complimentary

verses to the ladies, and trifle agreeably on the violin.

George fared worse than his elder brothers in respect to education and the opportunity of making a good start in life. He was sent for a couple of years to a school in the neighbouring village of Dendron, where his fees amounted to the modest sum of 5*s.* a quarter, and his board to £4 10*s.* a year. Though a good steady boy, he made so little progress in his studies that he was brought home at the early age of eleven, and set to work at his father's trade, or trades. His period of schooling was thus of the briefest, but those who have represented the future painter as a rough untutored peasant have forgotten the stimulating influence of the clever and practical father, whose companionship and example, together with the opportunity afforded in the home life of learning many useful manual crafts, made some compensation for the lack of a more regular intellectual training. The boy imitated his father in modelling figures in wood, drawing ornaments and architectural designs, and constructing violins. Upon one of these home-made instruments, the neck of which was elaborately carved, he took pleasure in playing down to a

late period of his life. The books that played the most important part in George Romney's artistic education were Leonardo da Vinci's *Treatise on Painting* and a now forgotten work called *Art's Masterpiece*, which chanced to be on the family shelves.

It has been stated, by certain of his chroniclers, that the youthful Romney evolved his ideas of art out of his inner consciousness, without having seen or heard anything that could fertilise his budding talent, beyond the sight of some illustrations in a magazine. But this was not the case. One of the most powerful factors in his early development was his friendship with an intelligent, but not too highly-principled watchmaker, John Williamson by name, who settled in Furness when George Romney was about fifteen. Williamson was presumably independent of his trade, for he seems to have devoted his time to the study of music, mechanics, natural philosophy and alchemy. He taught his young friend what he knew of art, and on one memorable occasion took him to Whitehaven to hear Giardini [1] play. For some time after that expedition the

[1] Felix Giardini, violinist and operatic composer (1716-96). Gainsborough was a great admirer of his genius, and was anxious to buy his violin, which had once belonged to Corelli.

boy, already able to flourish on his home-made violin, hesitated whether he would choose, in the dream-future, the career of a great painter or of a famous musician. For a brief period he seems to have been attracted by Williamson's alchemical studies, but the story of his friend's unfortunate experiences, which was early confided to him, prevented him from wasting his energies upon the pursuit of the philosopher's stone, or the elixir of life.

Williamson, it appears, previous to his arrival in Furness, had expended time, money, and trouble upon experiments that he fully believed would lead to the discovery of the long-sought secret, the power of transmuting common metals into gold. For many months he had kept up the fires in his furnace with unbroken regularity, and at length the hour drew near for the final test upon which all his hopes depended. At the critical moment his wife appeared with the request that he would come to the tea-table, and help her to entertain a party of guests. It was in vain that he excused himself; her importunity prevailed, and with the utmost reluctance he complied with her demand. While the unhappy alchemist was playing host at the tea-table his furnace blew up, and all his hopes were destroyed in the

explosion. The disappointment aroused in him so violent an antipathy to his wife that he was unable to remain in the same house with her, and shortly after the catastrophe he left his home and settled in Furness. His resentment against his importunate wife did not extend to the rest of her sex, for he took a morganatic partner, whom he married as soon as he was freed by death from his first union. This incident, as related by Williamson, made so strong an impression on Romney's mind that, in his old age, he thought of painting a series of pictures to represent the alchemist's disastrous experience. The mingled compassion and gratitude with which he regarded his friend had some share, it is supposed, in imbuing him with a prejudice against the feminine element in a life devoted to art or science, and in shaping his conduct towards his own wife.

Yet the next influence that was brought to bear upon the boy's artistic development was a feminine one—not the disturbing influence of a sweetheart, but the stimulating encouragement of a woman of superior age and culture. A Mrs. Gardner,[1] the sister of a well-to-do trades-

[1] A son of Mrs. Gardner's was afterwards one of Romney's pupils, and became a fashionable crayon artist.

man at Lancaster, with whom the Romneys had dealings, perceived that here was a youth of genius, and being herself possessed of a refined taste and a passion for art, she was heard with respectful attention when she urged that his powers should be cultivated. Fired by her applause, George made a drawing of this appreciative friend, which was much admired in the family circle, and was probably his first serious attempt at portraiture.

By the advice of Mrs. Gardner and other friends, George Romney was apprenticed in his twenty-first year to a travelling portrait painter named Christopher Steele, a native of Egremont, in Cumberland, who had lately settled in Kendal, and there obtained so much employment that he required an articled pupil to assist him in the subordinate parts of his work. Steele was himself only twenty-four, and had received his chief training from Vanloo[1] during a year's residence in Paris. Though no genius, he had a knack of turning out "neat portraits," and at that time little more was expected from a provincial English artist. The appellation of "itinerant dauber"

[1] There was a whole family of French artists of that name, but Steele's master is said to have been the most famous of all, Carlo Vanloo (1705-65).

bestowed upon him by Richard Cumberland seems to have been unnecessarily severe.

It was in the month of March, 1755, that George Romney was bound to "Count" Steele —so nicknamed from his Frenchified manners and love of finery—for a term of four years. A premium of twenty pounds was paid, in return for which the pupil was to receive board, lodging, and teaching, while his father was to find him in clothes and pocket-money. At first Steele taught his apprentice nothing, and only employed him in such mechanical duties as grinding colours and cleaning palettes. His conduct improved, however, when he discovered that the boy could be of real service to him in his profession, and thus leave him more time to spend on his pleasures and amusements. Steele seems to have possessed the artistic temperament without the compensating genius; he was a Bohemian of the first water, and qualified to "set the table in a roar," but his social talents tempted him to neglect his art, while his taste for expensive amusements could not easily be gratified by painting portraits at four guineas a head. Hence the somewhat desperate expedient by which he tried to improve his fortunes.

Among the Count's pupils was a young lady,

reputed an heiress, with whom he planned an elopement to Gretna Green. But his Dulcinea was so vigilantly guarded that the lover, unable to conduct all the arrangements for flight single-handed, was obliged to call his apprentice to his aid. In the course of these delicate negotiations, Romney, a nervous, excitable lad, was taken ill with a fever, which very nearly put an end to his career. While the master was flourishing in Scotland with his bride, the pupil was lying on a bed of sickness in his lodging at Kendal, where he was devotedly nursed by one of the daughters of the house. This girl, Mary Abbott, was of much the same social standing as himself, but her father having died young, she had been obliged to work for her living from an early age. She had, however, been carefully brought up by her widowed mother, and is described as a girl of good character and some natural refinement. Without being a beauty, she possessed the comeliness of youth, excelling rather in symmetry of form than in regularity of feature. Weakened by illness, and overflowing with gratitude for her devotion, Romney, then at the susceptible age of twenty-one, fell in love with his nurse, and soon made the pleasing discovery that his affection was returned.

CHAPTER II

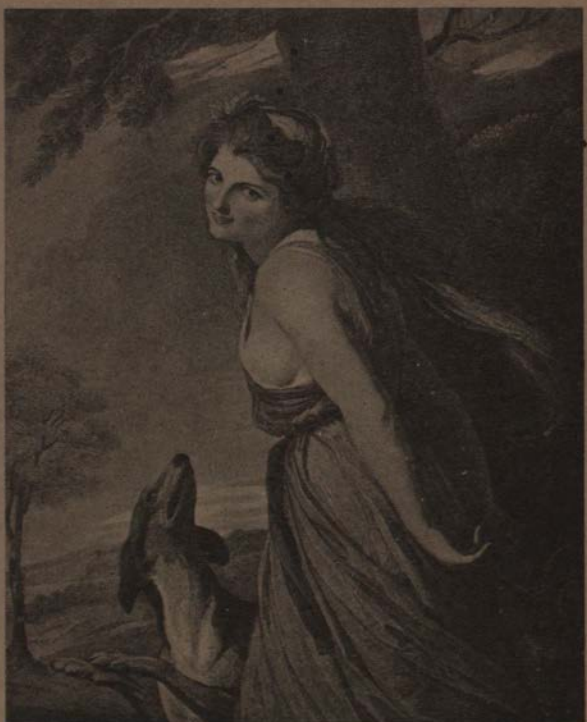
MARRIAGE AND INDEPENDENCE

Union to Mary Abbott—Removal to York—Return to Kendal—Indentures cancelled—A professed portrait painter—Local patronage—Lottery of pictures—Removal to London—Contemporary art and artists—Picture of the Death of Wolfe—The premium awarded and withdrawn—Sale of picture.

A CONVALESCENCE enlivened by love-making was interrupted by a peremptory demand from Steele that his apprentice should join him in York, where he proposed to stay for an indefinite period. York was a long way from Kendal in those days, and the lovers came to the conclusion that so terrible a separation could only be made endurable by the knowledge that they were joined in unbreakable bonds. Their marriage, thus suddenly decided upon, took place on October 14th, 1756, only a few days before the bridegroom's departure for York. This hasty step incurred, not unnaturally, the disapproval of George Romney's

parents; but he wrote to explain to them, as so many young men in like circumstances have done before and since, that this apparently imprudent marriage was in reality an act of worldly wisdom, since the knowledge that another was dependent on his exertions would serve as a spur to his industry; while his mind being now at rest, and his time no longer wasted in youthful follies, he would be able to practise his art with diligence and success.

Romney's chroniclers-in-chief differ materially in their accounts of this period of his life. As regards matters of fact, his son, the Rev. John Romney, is the most trustworthy guide; but as regards matters of feeling, Hayley, as the artist's friend and confidant, must be allowed to speak with some authority. Into Hayley's sympathetic ear Romney, in after years, poured the story of his youthful ambitions and struggles, and admitted that he was no sooner married than he bitterly repented him of his folly. Already he realised that he was possessed of exceptional powers, but he also realised, with a wisdom beyond his years, that the most arduous training was required for their full development. To study in London, to travel in Italy, to see the works of the great masters, and to pit himself against his contem-



LADY HAMILTON AS A BACCHANTE

poraries—these had been his chief aspirations, and he had placed an almost insuperable barrier in the way of their fulfilment. He would now be obliged to spend his best years in painting "pot-boilers" for bread; he could not hope to support a family during the first years of struggle in London; and the vision of Italy vanished from off his horizon. Remembering the misfortunes of his alchemist friend, he persuaded himself of the truth of the old saws which preach that a wife is a millstone around the neck of genius, or that a young man married is a young man marred, and his wedding-bells seemed to toll the knell of fame. In later years he was accustomed to describe the struggle that took place between his ambition and his duty in terms that would have excited compassion in harder hearts than that of the sentimental Hayley.

The departure for York brought temporary relief to the young husband's distracted mind, since for nearly a year he was able practically to ignore the fetters that he was unable to break. During his absence he was supplied with pocket-money by his wife, who sent him half a guinea at a time, concealed beneath the seal of a letter. In return he sent her his own portrait, probably the first he ever painted in

oils, which is described as a hard and laboured performance. While in York Romney made the acquaintance of Sterne, who was sitting to Steele, and who patronised the young apprentice. Sterne, at this time a man of forty-one or two, held the living of Sutton-in-the-Forest, eight miles from York. It was not until 1760 that the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* appeared, a work which was greatly admired by Romney, who drew the inspiration for more than one of his early pictures from its pages.

On leaving York, Steele, of whose wealthy bride we hear no more, returned with his pupil to Kendal, but a few weeks later was called to Ireland on business. Before his departure he agreed to cancel his apprentice's indentures in consideration of a sum of ten pounds which Romney had advanced to him by small instalments. Thus at the age of two-and-twenty the young artist found himself his own master, the father of a family—a son having recently been born to him—and in a position to set up for himself as a full-fledged portrait painter. The lack of technical training which hampered his early efforts was counterbalanced to some extent by his natural genius and his untiring industry; while it must be remembered that the standard of art criticism in provincial

England at this period was anything but exalted.

Romney's first independent production is said to have been a hand holding a letter, which for many years adorned the window of the post office at Kendal. His earliest commissions for portraits he received from a neighbouring family, the Stricklands, of Sizergh. He became a favourite with these early patrons, and was frequently invited to Sizergh, where he was allowed to copy a couple of works by Lely and Rigaud, the only good portraits that he had the opportunity of studying before he went to London. The Strickland patronage brought other commissions from the local gentry, and the young artist was presently in full practice; but at the prices he then charged—two guineas for a head and six guineas for a whole length—he was obliged to paint with great rapidity in order to earn a living. In this way he acquired a swiftness and certainty of touch that were almost unequalled among his fellows.

Endowed with a strong constitution and inspired by a secret ambition that enabled him to overcome, for the time being, his natural tendency to irresolution and diffidence, he worked with unwearied industry in his obscure

sphere during the next four or five years, the greater portion of the time being spent with his family at Kendal, though when business became slack in that neighbourhood he moved for a few weeks to Lancaster, or some other town where there seemed to be a likelihood of finding new patrons. Although portrait painting was the profession by which he earned his bread, he devoted a part of his scanty leisure to copying, or rather "adapting," in oils some good prints which he had bought in York, as well as to the execution of one or two original compositions. His chief relaxation during this strenuous period was found in the cultivation of another art. He frequently entertained a party of musical amateurs at his own house, while even in the hours of solitary labour his home-made violin was always at hand, and in the intervals of painting he would refresh himself by playing some favourite melody. That Romney, in spite of his inadequate education, was not uncultivated, seems to be proved by the fact that he was the chosen friend of the learned Adam Walker,[1] the most intimate companion of his youth.

[1] Adam Walker (1730–1821), author, philosopher, and inventor. He was born of poor parents at Patterdale, Westmorland, but worked his way up to the headmastership of a first-rate school at Manchester. Later,

Never during all these struggling, inglorious years did the young artist lose sight for a moment of his long-cherished ambition to tempt fortune in London, and, the Fates proving kind, so to improve himself by study and travel as finally to reach the highest walks of his profession. But before even the initial step could be taken, the small capital that would be necessary for the support of himself and his family until he found his footing in London, must be slowly and painfully laid together, guinea by guinea, if not shilling by shilling. After four years of independent work, he had accumulated a large number of oil copies of prints, as well as a few original compositions, and being unable to sell them privately, he determined to dispose of them by means of a lottery. Accordingly, a notice was published to the effect that "A List of Paintings by Mr. George Romney" was to be disposed of after the manner of the State Lottery, to consist of eighty-two tickets at half a guinea each. There were twenty pictures in the list, valued by the artist at prices varying from five shillings

he came to London, where he lectured on astronomy and natural philosophy. He invented the Celestina, an improved harpsichord, carriages to go by wind and steam, a transparent orrery, and a system of rotatory lights used for the Scilly Isles.

to eight guineas. Of these eight were original, the remainder being copies of prints after eminent masters. Among the originals were two scenes from Lear, a landscape with figures, two candle-light studies, and a "Shandean Piece," representing Dr. Slop in Tristram Shandy's parlour. The pictures were exhibited in Kendal Town Hall, where the prizes were drawn, and the tickets being all sold, the painter thought himself lucky to clear a sum of forty guineas for half as many pictures.

It was not until the beginning of 1762 that Romney, finding himself the master of a sum of one hundred guineas, the savings of five laborious years, felt justified in carrying out his long-cherished project—a plunge into the great world of London. His capital was not sufficient to allow of his taking his wife and children—there was now a little daughter as well as a son—on this adventurous expedition. He had to choose between temporarily sacrificing his family to his ambition, or permanently sacrificing his ambition to his family, and ambition won the day. It is not probable that Romney put the matter thus crudely to himself. His wife was willing that he should depart alone upon his quest, but it seems to have been understood between them that she and her

MRS. MARK CURRIE

From the picture in the National Gallery

children should join him in London as soon as he was in a position to maintain them there.

On March 14th, 1762, after dividing his capital equally between himself and his wife,[1] George Romney, then in his twenty-eighth year, set out on horseback for London. A visit to his old master, Count Steele, at Manchester, and an alarm from a supposed highwayman were the only incidents that broke the monotony of the seven days' journey. For the first fortnight after his arrival in town Romney stayed at an old City hostelry, the Castle Inn, whence he moved into lodgings in Dove Court, near the Mansion House. Here, without introductions, without patrons, and without any influential friends, he set himself to climb slowly, silently, and resolutely to the topmost rung of the professional ladder.

It may be profitable to pause at this point in the story of Romney's life, in order to take a rapid survey of the state of pictorial art in England at the period of his arrival in London. It must be remembered that no recognised school of painting existed in this country prior to the middle of the eighteenth century. In an *Essay on Design*, published in 1712, the

[1] According to the artist's son. Hayley states that Romney took thirty guineas for his own expenses.

great Lord Shaftesbury observed: "As to painting, we have as yet nothing of our own native growth in this kind worthy of being mentioned." Again, in a letter written from London just before Reynolds' star rose above the horizon, the Abbé le Blanc says: "The portrait painters are at this day more numerous and worse in London than ever they have been. Since M. Vanloo[1] came hither they strive in vain to run him down, for nobody is painted but by him." The first art school in London was opened in 1724 by Sir John Thornhill (Hogarth's father-in-law) at his house in Covent Garden, and on his death in 1734 the casts and models were transferred to an Academy in St. Martin's Lane. In 1762 there was no Royal Academy, no National Gallery, and practically no opportunity for young artists to study the works of the old masters, unless they could obtain permission to visit the private picture-galleries of great noblemen. Consequently, it was a general article of belief that no art student's training could be complete unless he had spent a year or two on the Continent.

In respect to the opportunity for public exhibition the young painter was better off. In 1745 Hogarth and seventeen other artists had presented pictures to the Foundling

[1] Jean Baptiste Vanloo (1684–1745).

Hospital, and so great an attraction did these prove to the public that the room in which they hung presently became a fashionable lounge. This evidence of the existence of artistic taste in the citizens of London suggested the idea of annual exhibitions. In 1760 the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Sciences held their first exhibition of pictures with brilliant success. At this time there was no charge for admission, but the authorities, finding that soldiers and nursemaids thronged the rooms, and feeling no concern for the art education of the masses, charged a shilling for admission to their third annual exhibition, which was held in Spring Gardens. In 1765 the artists who were in the habit of exhibiting at Spring Gardens obtained a charter of incorporation, but dissensions arising, a party of young painters, calling themselves the Free Society of Artists, established an exhibition of their own in a room in St. Martin's Lane.

Reynolds, who was eleven years older than Romney, had come to London ten years earlier, in 1752. He had already spent a couple of years in Italy, had practised portrait painting with success at Plymouth, and acquired some influential West Country patrons. Although it

was not without a struggle that he made his way in London, by the year 1762 his position as a portrait painter was assured. Benjamin West, four years younger than Romney, came to London about the same time, after spending three years in Italy. Reynolds' abandonment of historical painting left West almost without a rival in that branch of art, and, thanks to royal patronage, he was enabled to climb out of the portrait-painting rut in which the majority of British artists were compelled to trudge, owing to the patron's scepticism of their ability to produce original work. Allan Ramsay (1709–84), a "respectable" artist, according to Reynolds, had been appointed Court painter, and thus was removed in great measure from the sphere of struggle and competition. Gainsborough, then in his thirty-sixth year, had settled at Bath after his marriage, and did not come to London till 1774. Northcote (1731–1841) was still making watches at Plymouth, and Barry (1741–1806) did not return from Italy, whither Burke had sent him, till 1775. Zoffany (1733–1810) was just emerging from obscurity, being elected a member of the Society of Artists in 1762, while Robert Edge Pine (1730–88) and John Mortimer[1]

[1] Cumberland alludes to this artist in the line—
"And ready Mortimer, who laughs at toil."

(1741–79), Romney's most dangerous rivals in the struggle for premiums, were already in the field.

After a few months spent in Dove Court, Romney moved to Bearbinder Lane, where he painted several portraits at the pathetic price of three guineas for a three-quarter length. He had also finished a large picture of the "Death of Rizzio," which he always regarded as his best work in his early manner, but, finding no purchaser, it had to be sacrificed to considerations of space; in other words, it was cut up when the artist removed from one lodging to another. In the intervals of "pot-boiling," he contrived to paint another ambitious work—the "Death of Wolfe"—with which he competed in the spring of 1763 for the premiums offered by the Society of Arts for the best historical composition.

On this occasion the first prize was awarded to Robert Edge Pine for a large picture of "Canute Rebuking the Waves," and the second to Romney for his "Death of Wolfe." Protests were quickly raised against the latter decision. It was urged that the artist should be disqualified; firstly, because he had clothed his characters in modern uniforms instead of in the conventional classic costume; and secondly,

because the subject was not historical, the death of Wolfe having occurred so recently that no historian had yet recorded it. It was also insinuated that the picture was not really painted by this young man of whom no one had ever heard, but was the work of an old artist who had retired into the country. Reynolds and other influential persons were among the malcontents, and finally the decision of the committee was reversed. The premium of fifty guineas was awarded to Mortimer for his picture of "Edward the Confessor seizing the Treasures of his Mother"; but in consideration of the merit of the disqualified picture, a sum of twenty-five guineas was voted to Romney.

Richard Cumberland, in his account of this incident, says: "Poor Romney, friendless and unknown, was set aside in favour of a rival better supported, a hardship so obvious and partiality so glaring that the committee could not face the transaction, but voted him a premium extraordinary." Romney himself, however, is said to have absolved those judges who gave their sentence against him of any suspicion of unfairness.

"He told me," relates Hayley, "with that ingenuous spirit which was one of his most

amiable characteristics, that Reynolds was the person who, with great justice, contended that the second prize was due to Mortimer for his picture of 'Edward the Confessor,' a picture which Romney liberally acknowledged to be so strikingly superior to his own, that he was far from repining at being obliged to relinquish a prize too hastily assigned to him; and he therefore accepted with lively gratitude the present of twenty-five guineas which the committee gave him, not as a compensation for injury received, but as a free and liberal encouragement to his promising talent."

The picture which had been the subject of so much contention was afterwards bought for twenty-five guineas by a banker named Stephenson, and sent out to India as a present to Governor Verelst, who placed it in the Council Chamber at Calcutta. It may be worth noting in this connection that Benjamin West exhibited a picture on the subject of the death of Wolfe in 1766. The characters were attired in modern uniforms, correct in every detail, and the success of this work led to the gradual abandonment of "conventional" costume in historical painting, and the adoption of what conservative critics called the "coat and waistcoat" school of composition.

CHAPTER III

EARLY PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

Foreign travel essential to success—Journey to Paris—Study of foreign masters—Joseph Vernet—Return to London—Picture of death of King Edmund—Award of second premium—Visit to family at Kendal—Peter Romney—Introduction to Richard Cumberland—Cumberland's sketch of Romney—Visit of Garrick to Romney's studio—Opening of the Royal Academy—Increase of patronage—Portraits of Sir George Warren and family, Mrs. Cumberland, and Mrs. Yates.

THE merits of Romney's ill-used picture, and the public feeling that had been excited in his favour, appear to have brought him into notice, and obtained for him more regular employment. He was now able to charge five guineas for a head, and to lay by a little money towards the fulfilment of a darling project. This was not, as might have been supposed, reunion with his family, but, what was far more important from a professional point of view, a visit to the Continent. Mrs. Romney, who had lost her little girl about a

year after her husband's departure, had given up her home in Kendal, and gone to live with her father-in-law at Furness. She was thus assured of food and shelter, which was fortunate, considering that her husband, during his first months in London, had been obliged to send for twenty guineas out of the fifty that he had left for her provision. There was at any rate no necessity for her coming to London until her husband's position was assured, and Romney had speedily discovered that the only way to assure it was to be able to boast of the advantages of foreign travel. To have studied the works of the old masters, then rarely accessible in England, was regarded as so essential a part of a British artist's training, that without such a certificate of merit, he had little chance of profitable employment. To the inquiries of his sitters on the subject of his foreign studies, Romney was obliged to reply that he had never been out of his own country, and in consequence of this fatal admission he found himself compelled to work for lower prices than were obtained by travelled artists of inferior talent.

A pilgrimage to Italy was as yet far beyond his means, but by dint of painting portraits diligently throughout the year, and foregoing

the privilege of exhibiting an historical work during the season of 1764, he contrived to save a sum sufficient to carry him to Paris, and maintain him there for a few weeks. His travelling companion was Thomas Greene, a young North Country lawyer, then of Gray's Inn, who had been educated at the same school as Romney, and whose friendship had been won in boyish days by the gift of a home-made violin.

The pair arrived in Paris about the middle of September, 1764, and Romney wrote thence to his younger brother Peter, who had also adopted painting as his profession :—

"I was very much struck with the strange appearance of things at first sight. The degeneracy of taste that runs through everything is farther gone here than in London. The ridiculous and fantastical are the only points they seem to aim at. The paintings I have yet seen are not much better, I mean by the present masters; but those of the time of Louis XIV. are very great, and every church and chapel is filled with them. The vast collections I see every day make me feel no inclination either for designing or writing at present."

Among the French artists of the past Le

MRS. STABLES AND CHILDREN

Sueur,[1] the French Raphael, the painter of the soul, seems to have appealed most strongly to Romney's individual taste. In respect to his contemporaries, he was fortunate in having a letter of introduction to Claude Joseph Vernet, the father of Carl and the grandfather of Horace Vernet. Joseph, as he was generally called, was then in his fiftieth year, and had been famous for more than a quarter of a century. After eleven years spent in Rome and Naples, he had been recalled by Louis XV. in 1753, in order that he might execute a great series of paintings of the chief seaports of France. Vernet painted fifteen or sixteen of these views, residing at each seaport in turn while the work was in progress. But wearying of the nomad life, and finding it difficult to obtain payment from the Government, he settled in Paris in 1762.

It is possible that Romney's letter of introduction was from Steele, whose old master, Vanloo, had painted an admirable portrait of

[1] Eustache le Sueur (1617-55) was one of the founders of the French Academy of Painting, and the rival of Le Brun. His picture of "St. Paul curing the Sick" was regarded as his masterpiece. In the monastery of the Chartreux de Luxembourg, whither he retired after killing a man in a duel, he painted a fine series from the Life of St. Bruno in twenty-two subjects.

Vernet. The marine painter at this time had apartments in the Louvre, and, owing to his influence at Court, was able to obtain for his visitor free access to the Orleans Gallery and other collections. He, like Romney, was an enthusiastic musical amateur, and the intimate friend of Gluck and Piccinni; while having married a lady of Irish extraction, it is probable that he was able to converse with the English artist in his own tongue. Romney made the most of his six weeks in Paris, examining all the most renowned works, not only in the capital, but also in the neighbouring palaces. According to Hayley, the pictures that contributed most to his own immediate improvement as a portrait painter were the famous Rubens in the Luxembourg Gallery.

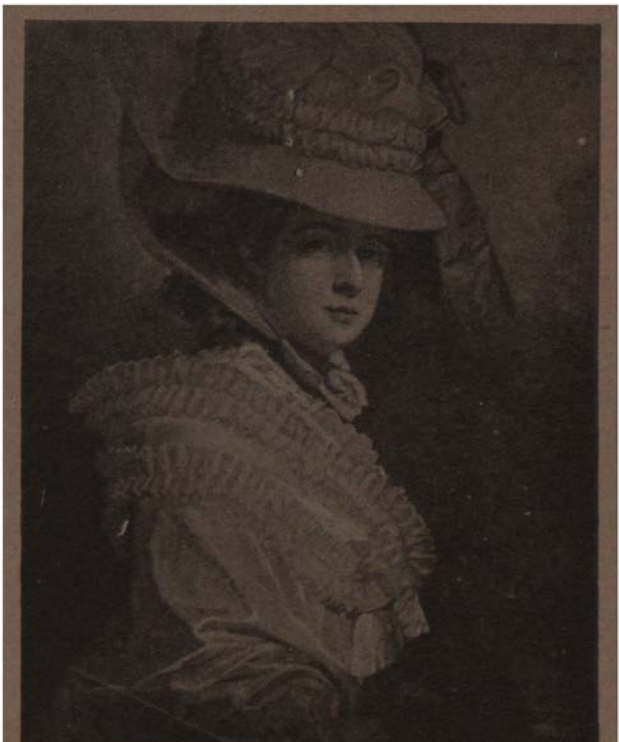
On his return to London, Romney, by the advice of his friend Greene, moved to lodgings in Coney Court, Gray's Inn, where he obtained commissions for portraits from Sir Joseph Yates, a Lancashire man, and one or two other eminent lawyers. The increase of his employment as a portrait painter did not, however, lead him to neglect historical composition, in which then, and throughout his whole life, it was his ambition to excel. To the exhibition held by the Free Society of Artists he sent

two pictures in 1765—a "Lady's Head in the Character of a Saint," and the "Portrait of a Gentleman." With an historical picture representing the Death of King Edward he competed for the premiums offered by the Society of Arts, and again won the premium of fifty pounds, which this time he was allowed to keep.

In the autumn of this year Romney spent a few weeks with his family, and painted several portraits in Kendal and Lancaster. There was still no question, apparently, of his wife's joining him in London, but he sent her money from time to time, and his young son seems to have been given a good education. Two or three of his brothers looked to him for occasional assistance, while every available guinea was laid by for the journey to Italy that was to put the coping-stone to his reputation. On returning to town Romney brought with him his brother Peter, a clever, unstable youth, with a turn for scribbling verse, and a pretty touch in crayon. It does not appear that Peter stayed long in London, but, being of a restless disposition, he presently returned to Kendal, where he made a little money by raffling his pictures, and then went to Manchester, where he set up as a crayon artist.

The want of patronage, together with the death of a girl to whom he was attached, drove him forth, and, after wandering about the country for a time, he settled at Ipswich, where he was imprisoned for debt by his frame maker. Being extricated from his embarrassments by the generosity of a few of his patrons, he moved to Cambridge, where he found a fair amount of employment But here, to conclude poor Peter's story, he took to drink, led away by the lavish hospitality of the University town, and again got into trouble. In 1777 his brother George paid his debts and sent him to Stockport, where he made a fresh start under promising conditions. But his constitution was undermined by his excesses, and he died a few months after leaving Cambridge, in the thirty-fourth year of his age. Some of his letters are printed in John Romney's Life of his father, from which it appears that Peter, like his more gifted brother, was an ardent admirer of "Virgin Simplicity," to which quality he declared that he had reduced "a dancing multitude" of things.

In 1766 George Romney exhibited with the Free Society a "Portrait of a Gentleman" and a "Conversation Piece," the latter representing his brothers James and Peter engaged in dis-



MISS CUMBERLAND
(AFTERWARDS LADY EDWARD BENTINCK)

cussing a problem in Euclid. In the following year he only exhibited one picture, under the title of "Two Sisters contemplating on (*sic*) Immortality," but another visit to the North brought him such a host of commissions from his countrymen that he was obliged to take several portraits back to London in order to receive the finishing touches.

In 1768 Romney moved to a house called the Golden Head, in Great Newport Street, Long Acre. It seems to have been in this year that he made the acquaintance of the poet-playwright Richard Cumberland, who proved a useful friend and admirer. Cumberland, who was a couple of years older than Romney, was the son of the Rev. Denison Cumberland, and grandson, on the mother's side, of the great Richard Bentley. Before he had finished his college career he was appointed secretary to Lord Halifax, then Viceroy of Ireland. When Lord Halifax's party went out of office, Cumberland was obliged to accept a small place, the Clerkship of Reports, which brought him in only two hundred a year; but, having a turn for letters, he supplemented his salary by writing plays. His first successful comedy, *The Brothers*, was brought out at Covent Garden in 1769, while the

most popular of all his works, *The West Indian,* was produced by Garrick in 1771.

In his Memoirs, Cumberland has left an interesting sketch of Romney, both as man and artist. He describes his friend as "shy, private, studious, and contemplative; conscious of all the disadvantages and privations of a very restricted education; of a habit naturally hypochondriac, with aspen nerves that every breath could ruffle—at once in art the rival, and in nature the very contrast of Sir Joshua Reynolds. A man of few wants, strict economy, and no dislike to money, he had opportunities enough to enrich him, even to satiety, but he was at once so eager to begin, and so slow in finishing his portraits, that he was for ever disappointed of receiving payment for them by the casualties and revolutions in the families they were designed for. So many of his sitters were killed off, so many favourite ladies dismissed, so many fond wives divorced, before he would bestow half an hour's pains upon their petticoats, that his unsaleable stock was immense; while with a little more regularity and decision, he would have more than doubled his fortune, and escaped an infinity of petty troubles. . . . When I first knew Romney, he was poorly

lodged in Newport Street, and painted for the small price of eight guineas for a three-quarter length. I sate to him, and was the first who encouraged him to advance his terms by paying him ten guineas for his performance."

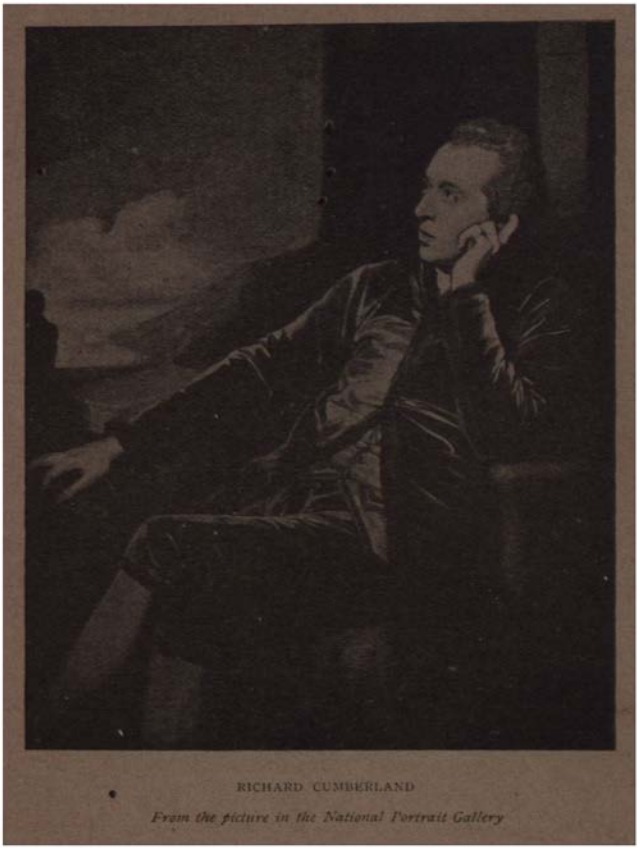
Cumberland, being anxious to introduce influential patrons to his *protégé*, took Garrick to see the portrait that Romney was painting of him. The artist also chanced to be at work at this time upon a large picture representing a Mr. Leigh (a proctor in Doctors' Commons), his wife, and six children. Garrick's attention was arrested, the instant he entered the studio, by this family group, the father in a close-buckled bob-wig, and scarlet waistcoat laced with gold, the mother and children maintaining a "contented abstinence from all expression of thought or action."

"Upon this unfortunate group," relates Cumberland, "when Garrick had fixed his lynx's eyes, he began to put himself into the action of the gentleman, and turning to Mr. Romney — 'Upon my word, sir,' said he, 'this is a very well-ordered family, and that is a very bright well-rubbed mahogany table at which that motherly good lady is sitting, and this worthy gentleman in the scarlet waistcoat is doubtless an excellent subject to the

State (I mean if all those are his children) but not for your art, Mr. Romney, if you mean to pursue it with that success which I hope will attend you.'"

The modest artist took the hint in good part, and turned his family with their faces to the wall. When Cumberland's portrait was produced—"It was very well," Garrick observed. "That is very like my friend, and that blue coat with a red cape is very like the one he has on; but you must give him something to do, put a pen in his hand, a paper on his table, and make him a poet. If you can once set him down to his writing, who knows but in time he may write something in your praise?" These words, as Cumberland observes, proved not unprophetical, since about this time he printed some complimentary verses on Romney in the *Public Advertiser*, and some years later dedicated a "pair of Odes" to his friend, with a flattering prefatory address.

It is to be feared that Garrick was inclined to be all things to all men, for while professing an ardent friendship for Cumberland and a genuine admiration for Romney, he took care, when in the company of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to run down the popular author of *The West Indian*, because he was the patron of Sir Joshua's rival.



RICHARD CUMBERLAND

From the picture in the National Portrait Gallery

"Damn his dish-clout face," he exclaimed, in the course of a morning call in Leicester Square, "his plays would never do for the stage if I did not cook them, and make prologues and epilogues for them, so that they go down with the public. He hates you, Sir Joshua, because you do not admire the painter whom he considers a second Correggio." "Who is that?" asked Sir Joshua. "Why, his Correggio," returned Garrick, "is Romney the painter."[1] If this conversation is correctly reported, it is clear that Reynolds' jealous dislike of the man who afterwards proved so dangerous a rival, was a matter of common knowledge, even in these early days.

The newly-founded Royal Academy, with Reynolds as its first President, held its opening exhibition in the spring of 1769. It may be that Romney knew that there was a prejudice against him in academical quarters; at any rate he sent no pictures to the new exhibition, but in 1769 he contributed to the Free Society two female portraits and a large family piece representing Sir George Warren, his wife, and a little girl caressing a bullfinch. This picture was so much admired that it brought him a considerable increase of patronage, and helped

[1] Northcote's Life of Reynolds.

to lay the foundations of his future popularity. In 1770 he exhibited with the Chartered Society in Spring Gardens a couple of figures called "Mirth" and "Melancholy," inspired by Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. These also attracted considerable attention, and were bought by Mr. Orde, afterwards Lord Bolton. It was probably about the same time that Romney received a commission to paint the portrait of Mrs. Cumberland, an incident which inspired her husband with the following lines, printed at first in the *Public Advertiser*, but afterwards included in his novel *Arundel*.

> "Romney, thy chastest tints select to trace
> The matron beauties of Eliza's face,
> Dip thy bright pencil in cerulean dyes,
> And animate the canvas with her eyes;
> Paint, if thou canst, my kiss upon her cheek,
> Give her a voice, and bid the portrait speak;
> Catch her dear image from a husband's heart,
> And draw her pure and faultless as thy art."

In 1771 Romney exhibited no fewer than six portraits, the most important being Mrs. Yates as the "Tragic Muse"—which suffered from comparison with Sir Joshua's portrait of Mrs. Siddons in the same character—and "Major Pearson conversing with a Brahmin." Though greatly improved in technique, Rom-

ney's work was still marred by a certain stiffness and coldness, which is attributed to his ignorance of the methods of the great Italian masters. For years past, as we have seen, he had been contemplating a professional tour in Italy, but hitherto the sinews of travel had not been forthcoming. In 1772, however, his income averaged a hundred pounds a month, and, in spite of the many calls upon his purse, he managed to get beforehand with the world. He had intended to set out for Rome in the autumn of this year, but owing first to illness and afterwards to a sudden influx of commissions, he was unable to leave London before the 20th of March, 1773.

CHAPTER IV

JOURNEY TO ITALY

Sacrifices for the sake of artistic improvement—Impressions of Paris—Travelling experiences—Feminine costume—Solitary life in Rome—Copy of Transfiguration—Encounter with sentry—Letter from Cumberland—Florence—Bologna—Venice—Friendship with Edward Montagu—Parma—Return to London.

ROMNEY is commonly described as a timid, cautious man, lacking in resolution, and with but little faith in his own powers. When inspired by a worthy ambition, however, he found sufficient courage and determination to throw up a large income and turn his back upon the position he had laboured so hard to gain, in order to spend two years in Italy for the sole purpose of improving himself in his art. This experiment, almost desperate in its audacity, was more than justified by the event, since comparatively late in life (he was thirty-eight when he went to Italy) he was able to change his methods, and

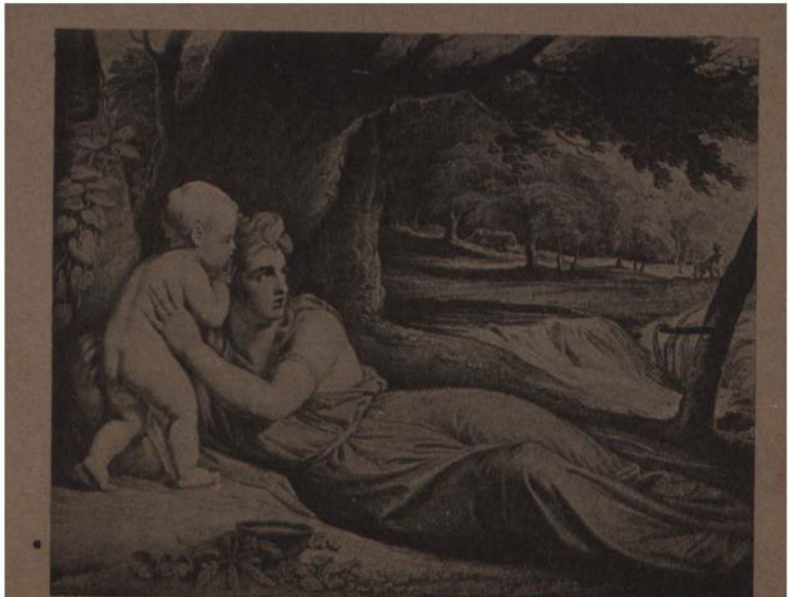
by means of his improved technique to take his rightful place in the ranks of contemporary painters. His travelling companion, Ozias Humphrey,[1] the miniature painter, had also given up a good connection from the desire for improvement, and the disinterested courage of the two artists roused the respect and admiration of their friends and patrons. The Duke of Gloucester, among others, showed his interest by giving Romney a letter of recommendation to the Pope, which obtained him permission to put up scaffolds in the Vatican, where he desired to make copies from some of Raphael's works.

Although Romney detested the manual labour of writing, he kept a brief record of his observations and experiences on the road to Italy, notes hastily scribbled into an old sketch-book, and afterwards used in journal letters to his friend, Thomas Greene. It has

[1] Born at Honiton in 1742. In 1763 he came to London, where he received help and encouragement from Sir Joshua Reynolds. In 1772 a fall from his horse so injured his nerves that he determined to go to Italy for the purpose of studying painting on a larger scale. In 1777 he returned to England, where he painted in oils till 1785, when he went to India for three years. Later he took to miniature painting again, till, his sight failing, he turned his attention to crayons. He became totally blind in 1797, and died in 1810.

been said that Romney's dislike to writing arose from his inability to express himself, or even to spell correctly, but unless his published letters have been retouched by his biographers, it is clear that he could wield, when he chose, a pen which, for natural vigour and lucidity, might have been envied by many a more cultured man. Writing to Greene from Paris, where a stay of three weeks was made, he observes, after some reflections on the politeness of the people and the magnificence of their palaces :—

"I must not omit to tell you how much those scenes which you and I have formerly trodden together are changed, or my notions and feelings are become different; what with the French imitating us, and we them, the manners and dresses of the two great cities are brought pretty nearly upon a level. . . . The principal difference I have observed in dress is that the men, from the Prince to the Valet de Chambre, wear muffs of an enormous size, slung round their waists, and always *chapeaux bras*, though the weather is colder here than I have felt in England the last winter. I have not seen a woman's hat on, in any order of people. It is a part of dress which gives much softness to the face by throwing it into



ALOPE

a half-shadow of any colour that the wearer chooses. The English ladies dress with more elegance and greater variety; and as to beauty and sentiment, the French hold no comparison with them.

"The taste for painting, and the art itself, are at the lowest ebb; simplicity they call vulgar, and pure elegance passes for gravity and heaviness; everything must have the air of a dancer or actor, the colour of a painted beauty, and the dress recommended by the barber, tailor, and mantua-maker. I think there is no better criterion whereby to judge the minds of a people than by their general taste, and this certainly holds good with respect to the French. They are a people that have no idea of simplicity, and are totally devoid of character and feeling. Nothing can be a greater proof of their degeneracy of taste than the indifference with which they treat everything produced by those great masters who have held the first rank for so many ages, viz. Raphael, Michael Angelo, Titian, etc. They say their works are too dark, gloomy, and heavy. With them everything must be light, false, fantastical, and full of flutter and extravagance—like themselves. Happily for us, we have to return to a country where manly

sense and feeling still remain, and where true taste is growing up; that kind which inspired the Italian schools."

From Lyons, where the travellers were detained a fortnight by Romney's indisposition, they proceeded by water to Pont St. Esprit, and journeyed thence to Nice *viâ* Aix and Marseilles. Romney was keenly interested in the appearance and costume of the women in the provinces through which they passed. The attire worn by the women of Avignon filled him with artistic rapture, and he expatiates at some length on the picturesque effect of their muslin caps and head-handkerchiefs, their little black jackets worn without stays, and the coloured silk handkerchiefs that covered their shoulders. "Their petticoats," he continues, "are of a different colour to their jackets, and reach a little below their knees, which gives them a very light and airy appearance, and exposes limbs round and cleanly formed. This may be supposed very delightful to the eye of a painter who has always been accustomed to see women dressed in stays,[1] with petticoats almost covering their heels."

[1] It must be remembered that "stays" in those days were equivalent to the dress-bodice in these, except that they were cut low, the neck being covered with a handkerchief.

At Nice an enforced stay of some weeks was made, contrary winds rendering it impossible to reach Genoa, the next stopping-place, by sea. It was not till May 25th that fair weather prevailed and the travellers were enabled to set sail for the City of Palaces, where they passed a few days in examining the contents of the galleries and private collections. Romney admired the costume of the Genoese ladies even more than that of the women of Avignon, and his description is worth quoting in proof of the accuracy and minuteness of his observation. "The dress," he writes, "is a loose piece of muslin or calico, which goes over their heads like a veil, and over their arms and shoulders like a capuchin. They let it fall over the forehead as low as the eyebrows, and twist it under the chin; they generally have one hand almost up to the chin, holding the veil with the fingers beautifully disposed among the folds, and the other across the breast. They are short-waisted, and have very long trains which produce the most elegant flowing lines imaginable; so that, with the beautiful folds of the veil or cloak, they are the finest figures that can be conceived. When the veil is off, you see the most picturesque and elegant hair; it is braided up the back of the head and

twisted round several times, and beautifully varied ; it is pinned with a long silver pin."

Taking passage in a felucca to Leghorn, the travellers encountered a terrific storm, and, the crew abandoning their work to invoke the aid of their patron-saints, it was more by good luck than skill that the boat arrived safely at Leghorn. Thence the two artists travelled by way of Florence and Pisa to Rome, where they arrived on the 18th of June, just three months after leaving London.

As soon as he was settled in lodgings, Romney withdrew from the society of his fellows, and devoted himself to incessant and solitary study. "Such was the cautious reserve," writes Hayley, "that his singular mental infirmity—a perpetual dread of enemies —inspired, that he avoided all further intercourse with his fellow-traveller and with all the artists of his own country who were then residing in Rome." There seems to have been some justification, apart from the fear of imaginary enemies, for this unsociability, since Humphrey is said to have been an idler and a gossip, while Northcote relates an anecdote of a conceited painter named Edwards, who accompanied Romney on a first visit to the Sistine Chapel, and, after a hasty glance round, exclaimed—

MISS BENEDETTA RAMUS
(AFTERWARDS LADY DAY)

"Egad, George, we're bit!"

But Romney's chief motive for seclusion was probably the knowledge that he had no time to waste in social pleasures, since he had come to Rome at a much later age than the majority of his fellow-students. He was now in his thirty-ninth year, and he doubtless remembered—not without a pang of envious regret—that West had gone to Italy at twenty-two, and Reynolds at twenty-six. During the eighteen months that he spent in Rome Romney produced no original pictures of first-rate importance. We hear of sketches of characteristic heads—a beggar dwarf, a professed assassin, and an old Jew; of a wood nymph and other nude studies made from a beautiful and virtuous model, whose mother always accompanied her to the studio; and of a picture of Providence brooding over Chaos, which last has a history. For several years this picture hung in Romney's gallery in Cavendish Square, but at the time of the Gordon riots in June, 1780, the artist, fearing that it might be regarded as an object of Popish idolatry, hid it away in a back room. When it was brought out after his death, John Romney, disapproving of any attempt to represent Providence on canvas, renamed

it "Jupiter Pluvius," and under this title it was catalogued for the sale of his father's effects.

A large portion of Romney's time was devoted to an elaborately finished copy of the groups in the lower half of the Transfiguration, painted on the same scale as the original; but he also made innumerable sketches and studies from other works of the great masters. The even flow of his life at this period seems to have been varied by but one exciting incident. The lodgings that he occupied during the early months of his stay in Rome were in the College of the Jesuits, whose order the Pope was taking measures to suppress. The college was, in consequence, surrounded by a military guard, all egress being strictly prohibited. Romney, who understood no Italian, was quite unconscious of what was passing around him, and, having to pass the gate one day, disregarded the sentinel's unintelligible warning. This act of disobedience might have been followed by most serious results, for the soldier levelled his musket, and if Romney had not hastily called out "Inglese," would probably have put an end to his career. Fortunately, the word operated like a charm, and the artist passed on, convinced that he owed

his life to his promptness in proclaiming his nationality.

Richard Cumberland kept his friend informed of what was passing in England during his absence, and in a letter dated Warwick Castle, August 14th, 1714, he observes :—

"The art has stirred very little since you left us; this year exhibited no advances in taste and execution. Barry fell into the false sublime and became ridiculous; West was on the wane, and our friend, Sir Joshua, though very voluminous, had nothing supremely capital; coarse and flaring in his style and colours, he seems tired with nature, and is bringing in vagaries to hide his want of improvement. . . . Dance painted a single figure of Orpheus—*mulcentem tigres*—and did well in point of truth, but was vulgar; he carried the palm, however, from his contemporaries. . . . I must now say a few words to you from the amiable lord of this mansion; he has a few wishes about pictures, which perhaps you could gratify. There is a magnificent room in this castle, where a picture of consideration is wanting according to the proportion of sixty-three inches by forty-three; the subject historical, where more than one figure is employed. Lord Warwick knows too much of Italy and

pictures not to know how difficult it is to fall in with such a purchase on moderate terms; for he does not mean to dedicate a great sum to the purpose, but rather wishes to have a picture of effect and genius, which perhaps may cross you in your travels out of the beat of collectors, and not exceeding one hundred pounds sterling. He likewise entreats the favour of you, if it falls in your way, to buy him a few portraits for a collection he is making; they must be heads only of spirit and effect; Titian or Guido, if they can be met with in compass of moderation; marked characters or dignified persons. He likewise says that if you bring home any copies, which you mean to dispose of, or it falls in the way of your studies to make any copies from capital pictures, which you will part from at your return, he begs he may be considered in the first place; and any drafts you may make on him in St. James' Square for purchases he will duly honour."

It is characteristic of the period that this patron of art expressed no desire for any original work by his fellow-countryman. In the same letter Cumberland returns thanks for a "Head of Sappho" which Romney had sent him, and states that "Mr. Greville is now

STUDY OF LADY HAMILTON

From the picture in the National Gallery

writing to you, and enclosing a letter to Sir W. Hamilton, to prepare you a reception equal to your merits when you arrive at Naples." Romney did not carry out his intention of going to Naples, and therefore made no use of the letter; but this seems to be the first link in the chain that connected his fate with that of Emma Hart and her two protectors.

Romney left Rome in January, 1775, and proceeded to Florence, where he only remained three weeks. He would, it appears, have made a longer stay, if facilities had been allowed him for copying some of the treasures of the Pitti Palace; but, though Lord Cowper and Sir Horace Mann used all their influence on his behalf, the Grand Duke refused to allow any of the pictures to be taken down. In a letter to Mr. Charles Greville, which contains a brief account of his visit to Florence, Romney observes: "I met with great entertainment from the old masters, in particular Cimabue and Masaccio; I admired the great simplicity and purity of the former, and the strength of character and expression of the latter. . . . I am exceedingly concerned that I have not hitherto had it in my power to make any purchase for Lord Warwick, or to procure such pieces as you

wish to have. The Magdalene of Correggio rather sank in my opinion on a second view, and the owner had raised his price to two hundred sequins." If this was the famous Reading Magdalene, the above sentence throws rather a lurid light upon Romney's qualifications as an art connoisseur.

A fortnight on the homeward journey was spent at Bologna, where the English artist was offered, but declined, the Presidency of the Academy of Painting at the Institute. From Bologna Romney proceeded to Venice, whence he wrote an account of his journey to a friend and fellow-student named Carter, at Rome. The letter contains a rather touching description of his feelings on leaving Rome, and his last sight of the city from the summit of Monte Viterbo. "I looked with an eager eye," he writes, "to discover that divine place. It was enveloped in a bright vapour, as if the rays of Apollo shone there with greater lustre than at any other spot upon this terrestrial globe. My mind visited every place, and thought of everything that had given it pleasure; and I continued some time in that state, with a thousand tender sensations playing about my heart, till I was almost lost in sorrow. Think, O think, my dear Carter, where you are, and

MRS. ROBINSON (PERDITA)

From the picture at Hertford House

do not let the sweets of that divine place escape from you; do not leave a stone unturned that is classical; do not leave a form unsought that is beautiful; nor even a line of the great Michael Angelo."

Three weeks after his arrival in Venice, Romney wrote to Ozias Humphrey, who was still in Rome: "I have seen most of the works of Titian, Tintoret, and Paul Veronese. I am sorry to find many of the first very dark and much damaged; but as there are many of them, and parts of most in tolerable condition, there is enough to study from, though perhaps not of the sort you and I might wish for—I mean women and children. . . . I have been hard at work some time past in making studies from a picture of Titian, in the *Friary*. It represents a Madonna and Child, and St. Peter upon a flight of steps, and below a group of portraits. . . . I am very glad I did not make any studies from his works in Rome or Florence, being thoroughly convinced that a just idea of Titian can never be formed out of Venice."

While at Venice Romney made the acquaintance of that brilliant ne'er-do-weel, Edward Montagu, son of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who described him with more than maternal

candour as an excellent linguist, a thorough liar, and so weak-minded as to be capable of turning monk one day, and Turk three days after. Montagu, who was born in 1713, had studied Arabic at Leyden, fought at Fontenoy, been elected member for Huntingdon, and appointed one of the commissioners at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. He had amazed London by his extravagance, and had been imprisoned for cheating a Jew in Paris. In 1762 he went to the East, where he adopted Oriental costume and Oriental customs—including plurality of wives—which he retained when he returned to Europe. There could not, one would have thought, be much in common between this eccentric personage and the quiet, retiring artist; but there was an attraction in Montagu's varied knowledge and amusing conversation which subjugated men of far superior character and intellect. Romney painted a fine portrait of his new friend in Turkish dress, which was bought by Lord Warwick for fifty guineas, and afterwards passed into the possession of Lord Wharncliffe. This portrait, or more probably a replica of it, was engraved for Seward's *Anecdotes*, where it illustrates a small collection of Wortley Montagu's letters. After bringing further disgrace upon his family,

Lady Mary's worthless son died at Padua early in 1776 from inflammation of the throat, caused by swallowing the bone of a small bird.

After a couple of months in Venice, Romney journeyed to Parma, where he spent two or three weeks to good purpose, in studying the methods of Correggio and Parmigiano, some portion of whose grace and charm he was happily enabled to introduce into his own subsequent work. On leaving Parma he travelled homewards in leisurely fashion, by way of Turin, Lyons, and Paris, arriving in London on July 1st, 1775, after an absence of two years and three months.

CHAPTER V

IN CAVENDISH SQUARE

Beginning over again—A house in Cavendish Square—Prospect of ruin—Patronage of the Duke of Richmond—Dedication of Cumberland's Odes—Poetical eulogy—Introduction to William Hayley—Invitation to Eartham—Domestic arrangements—Hayley's *Poetical Epistles to Romney.*

THE situation in which Romney found himself on his return to his native land must have been regarded as far from promising even by a man of stronger nerves and more optimistic temperament than he could boast. Not only were his savings totally exhausted, but he was fifty pounds to the bad on his own account, and was saddled with a debt to the same amount incurred by one of his brothers. Worse still, the fashionable world had forgotten him, and it was clear that he would be obliged to fight his professional battle over again. It was felt by those who were interested in the painter's career that his best chance of recovering his lost

position lay in taking some bold, decisive step. A large house in Cavendish Square had recently been left vacant by the death of Francis Cotes, the crayon artist, and Romney, penniless and patronless though he was, was urged to take it. The situation and accommodation of the house made it a most desirable residence for a portrait painter, but the rent was high—a hundred guineas a year—and it is difficult to imagine how the timid, cautious Romney could have been persuaded to exchange his modest lodging for so comparatively splendid a habitation. Yet after many tremors and prolonged hesitation, he made the plunge, and moved into his new abode on Christmas Day, 1775.

"In Romney's singular constitution," observes Hayley, himself the most sanguine of men, "there was so much nervous timidity, united to great bodily strength and to enterprising and indefatigable ambition, that he used to tremble when he waked every morning in his new habitation with a painful apprehension of not finding business enough to support him." This apprehension was scarcely unnatural, considering that some weeks elapsed before the artist received any offer of employment, and that for a short time ruin actually

stared him in the face. He added to his own difficulties, however, by insisting on building a new studio, and by refusing some early commissions on the ground that he had not sufficient accommodation for sitters. The tide of fortune turned when the Duke of Richmond, a former patron, came to sit for his portrait. This, which represented the Duke in profile, reading, was so much admired that Romney was commissioned to paint several replicas of it, while the Duke further employed him on portraits of Admiral Keppel, Edmund Burke, the Hon. Mrs. Damer, Lord George Lennox, and other friends or relations.

In the course of this year, 1776, Richard Cumberland, being anxious to bring his friend before the notice of the public, dedicated a couple of Odes[1] to Romney, with a long address which, according to Horace Walpole, "hisses with the pertness of a dull man." Cumberland, as has been noted, had already printed in the *Public Advertiser* a poem which concluded, after a eulogium on Reynolds, and flattering allusions to other contemporary painters, with the following tribute to his *protégé*:—

[1] One to *The Sun*, the other to Dr. James, inventor of the powders.

MRS. JORDAN AS "THE COUNTRY GIRL"

"Apart, and bending o'er the azure tide,
With heavenly contemplation at his side,
A pensive artist stands—in thoughtful mood.
With downcast looks he eyes the ebbing flood;
No wild ambition swells his temperate heart,
Himself as pure, as patient as his art.
Nor sullen sorrow nor intemperate joy
The even tenor of his thoughts destroy;
An undistinguished candidate for fame,
At once his country's glory and its shame.
Rouse then at length, with honest pride inspired;
Romney, advance! be known and admired."

Boswell tells us that Johnson was supping at the "Crown and Anchor" one night about this time, when Sir Joshua, who was among the party, mentioned Cumberland's Odes. "Why, sir," observed Johnson, "they would have been thought as good as Odes commonly are, if Cumberland had not put his name to them, but a name immediately draws censure, unless it be a name that bears down everything before it. Nay, Cumberland has made his Odes subsidiary to the fame of another man. They might have run well enough by themselves; but he has not only loaded them with a name, but has made them carry double." In Croker's edition of Boswell, published in 1831, there is a footnote to the foregoing passage, which reads oddly enough at the

present time. After remarking that a curious book might be written on the vicissitudes of artistic reputations, he continues: "Horace Walpole talked at one time of Ramsay as of at least equal fame with Reynolds; and Hayley dedicated his lyre (such as it was) to Romney. What is a picture by Ramsay or Romney now worth?"

It must have been about the end of 1776 or the beginning of 1777 that Romney made the acquaintance of one who was to exercise a powerful influence on the whole of his after life. This was his future biographer, William Hayley, the Bard of Eartham, as he was styled by his friends. Hayley, who was born in 1745, was a man of means, and practised no profession, though he had been admitted to the Middle Temple. His chief occupation consisted of writing verses, which were much admired by the less critical of his contemporaries, and plays which found no favour in the eyes of managers. In 1770 he married Eliza, daughter of Dean Ball, of Chichester, and in 1774 he settled at Eartham, in Sussex, where he amused himself with adding to his house and laying out his grounds, having a passion both for building and planting which brought him into serious embarrassment in later years.

His wife, whom he had married in defiance of the knowledge that her mother had died insane, early developed an irritable temper and a tendency to nervous depression, which made her extremely difficult to live with, and led to her spending the greater portion of each year with friends at Bath. In 1786 a final separation took place between the pair.

In early youth Hayley had devoted a good deal of time to painting in water-colours, and had received instruction from his friend Jeremiah Meyer,[1] the miniaturist, but he was obliged to give up the pursuit owing to chronic inflammation of the eyes. In 1776, while furnishing his house at Eartham, it occurred to him that it would be a good plan to decorate it with some good portraits of the friends whose society he had relinquished on retiring to the country. Meyer recommended the employment of Romney for this purpose, describing him as a rising artist of undoubted talent. This recommendation led to several commissions, and, to quote Hayley's account, "Romney, while he was painting the portraits of Mr. Long and Mr. Thornton, with another of myself, not only pleased us as an artist,

[1] Meyer (1735-89) was appointed miniature painter to Queen Charlotte, and enamel painter to George III.

but displayed such endearing qualities as a companion, that we all became attached to him most cordially for life."

Perceiving, as he explains, that Romney, by reason of his peculiarities of temperament, stood in need of a frank and faithful monitor, Hayley sent him an invitation to spend his summer holiday at Eartham, together with a lengthy remonstrance, couched both in prose and verse, against his neglect of his health and his intemperance in work. The invitation was accepted, and the visit proved so agreeable to both host and guest, that it was repeated every autumn during a period of three-and-twenty years. Hayley was enthusiastically interested in all that pertained to literature or art, his manners were cheerful and sympathetic, and he was never so happy as when he could patronise, flatter, and entertain a celebrity. Southey, who looked with an indulgent eye upon what he called Hayley's "Miltonic" views of his marital duties, was accustomed to say, "Everything about that man is good except his poetry."

John Romney takes a much less favourable view of his father's friend, but then he was scarcely an impartial witness, having had many squabbles with the Bard. "The influ-

SERENA READING

From the picture in the Victoria and Albert Museum

ence that this connection had upon Mr. Romney's life," he observes, "was in many respects injurious. Mr. Hayley's friendship was grounded on selfishness, and the means by which he maintained it was flattery. By this art he obtained a great ascendency over the mind of Mr. Romney, and knew well how to avail himself of it for selfish purposes. He was able also, by a kind of canting hypocrisy, to confound the distinctions between vice and virtue, and to give a colouring to conduct that might, and probably did mislead Mr. Romney on some occasions."

In his biography of the artist Hayley moralises in his most lofty vein upon "the rash repentance for an imprudent and irretrievable measure [his early marriage] which was the great error and infelicity in the life of my too apprehensive friend." John Romney, however, was of opinion that Hayley's influence contributed more than any other to complete the estrangement which he professed to regret. The time had at length arrived when Romney, who was now earning a comfortable income, soon to become a splendid one, might have brought his family to town, but, from one cause or another, he had postponed this step so long that he now felt himself incapable of

taking it. He had omitted to mention the fact of his marriage to many of his associates, and he shrank from the "chaff" that would assail him were he now to divulge it. Not only had he become confirmed in his old-bachelor ways, but his most intimate friends being men of higher rank and culture than his own, he had not the courage to introduce an uneducated peasant wife among them. Finally, he had just paid his brother Peter's debts, his own son was about to proceed to college, and he was so bad a manager of his affairs that he probably never felt really beforehand with the world. These reasons, taken together, form no very adequate excuse for the desertion of a virtuous wife; but Mrs. Romney, so far as can be gathered, uttered no word of complaint or reproach. John Romney tells us that he once asked his mother, a woman of energetic and courageous mind, why she allowed herself to be separated from her husband during the best part of a lifetime, but she merely replied that she had always acted for the best. Hayley, who married two wives, and was unable to live with either, was certainly no better qualified to reprove Romney's conduct than he was to write the *Triumphs of Temper*.

In the early days of their friendship Romney

and Hayley formed many projects for uniting poetry and design in joint works that were never destined to be completed. Among these was a scheme for a poem on the adventures of Cupid and Psyche from Apuleius, for which Romney drew eight cartoons in chalk, and finished one subject in oils. This last, in which the figures were nude, was given to Mr. Long, the surgeon, who, priding himself on his artistic skill and, presumably, on the delicacy of his mind, "painted in" some drapery. The same gentleman added some wild beasts to Romney's splendid picture of Lady Hamilton as Circe. The Cupid and Psyche series was abandoned in consequence of Hayley's absorption in a work by which he hoped to draw public attention to the genius of his friend, namely, the *Poetical Epistles to Romney,* published in 1778. A secondary object of this curiously uninspired performance was to stimulate the ambition of the artist, and to persuade him not to spend too large a portion of his time in the lucrative drudgery of portrait painting, but to aspire to excellence in the highest department of his art.

In the first Epistle the poet describes the rise of painting in England, recommends subjects for historical pictures, and eulogises the

talents of contemporary artists. The second Epistle opens with the apostrophe—

> "Ingenuous Romney, whom thy merits raise
> To the pure summits of unclouded praise;
> Whom art has chosen with successful hand
> To spread her empire o'er this honoured land;
> Thy progress friendship with delight surveys,
> And this pure homage to thy Goddess pays."

This poem, which contained even more flattering tributes[1] to the artist's power, naturally inspired "ingenuous Romney" with warm feelings of gratitude toward the Bard, and cemented the growing friendship.

[1] For example:—

> "Nature in thee her every gift combined
> Which forms the artist of the noblest kind;
> That fond ambition which bestows on art
> Each talent of the mind and passion of the heart.
> That dauntless patience which all toil defies,
> Nor feels the labour while it views the prize,
> Enlightening study with maturing power,
> From these fair seeds has called the op'ning flower

CHAPTER VI

SECOND ARTISTIC PERIOD

Portraits painted between 1776 and 1781—Lord Thurlow—Sir Joshua Reynolds—Romney's prejudice against the Royal Academy—Work at Eartham—Historical painting.

IN the portraits painted by Romney during the first few years after his return to London the results of his Italian studies are made manifest—the masterly ease of touch, the enhanced charm of colour, the classic simplicity of arrangement. Among his sitters at this period (between 1776 and 1781) were Jane, Duchess of Gordon, Lady Warwick and her children, Miss Cathcart (afterwards Lady Mansfield), the pretty daughters of Richard Cumberland, the unhappy "Perdita" Robinson, Harriet Mellon[1] and her colleagues Kitty Bannister and Mrs. Davenport, Lady Craven (afterwards Margravine of Anspach), the

[1] Afterwards Mrs. Coutts, and, after the death of her first husband, Duchess of St. Albans.

Gower and the Clavering children, Lord Thurlow, Henderson the actor as Macbeth, and Sir Hyde Parker, captain of the *Phœnix*. An oval portrait[1] of Lady Craven was painted for Horace Walpole, one of her many admirers, its mingled truth and charm inspiring the purchaser with the following complimentary verses :—

"Full many an artist has on canvas fixed
All charms that nature's pencil ever mixed :
The witchery of her eyes, the grace that tips
The inexpressible douceur of her lips :
Romney alone in this fair image caught
Each charm's expression, and each feature's thought ;
And shows how in their sweet assembly sit,
Taste, spirit, softness, sentiment, and wit.'

It was in 1781 that Thurlow, at the request of Lord Gower, sat to Romney, who painted him at full length in his chancellor's robes, and to the end of his life regarded this work as the best of his productions in portraiture. Thurlow had formerly sat to Reynolds, but had been offended by the scant attention paid by Sir Joshua to his suggestion that the story of Orpheus and Eurydice would furnish good subjects for a series of pictures. Romney,

[1] This picture, which now hangs in the National Gallery, sold for £32 11*s.* at the Strawberry Hill Sale in 1842.

LADY CRAVEN
(AFTERWARDS MARGRAVINE OF ANSPACH)

From the picture in the National Gallery

always on the look-out for poetical suggestions, was delighted with the idea, and Thurlow, flattered by his intelligent appreciation, invited him to dinner, translated a whole episode from Virgil for his guidance, and publicly declared, "The town is divided between Reynolds and Romney; I belong to the Romney faction." The Chancellor gave even more practical proof of his esteem for his *protégé* by sending his daughters to sit to him, and by buying one of the four pictures which Romney painted in illustration of Hayley's poem *The Triumphs of Temper*. This work, which appeared in 1780, ran through fourteen editions, and made its author temporarily famous. The best-known of the illustrations represents the heroine, Serena, absorbed in Miss Burney's newly published *Evelina*.[1]

Romney's success had now excited the jealous resentment of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who refused to mention his name, but spoke of him slightingly as "the man in Cavendish Square." But the tide of rank, fashion, and beauty that once had flowed towards Leicester Square had been partially diverted from its course, and was

[1] It has been erroneously supposed that Honora Sneyd (afterwards Mrs. Edgeworth) sat for Serena, but the resemblance was accidental.

streaming in steadily increasing volume towards Cavendish Square, a change which Reynolds did not accept with his usual serenity. That Romney had attained to popular celebrity very shortly after his return from Italy is proved by the allusions to him in contemporary journals and correspondence. Miss Burney, while on a visit to the Thrales, at Streatham, in 1778, makes the following entry in her diary: "The other evening the conversation fell upon Romney the painter, who has lately got into a good business, and who was first recommended and patronised by Mr. Cumberland. 'See, madam,' said Dr. Johnson, laughing, 'what it is to have the favour of a literary man.'"

When he first settled in Cavendish Square Romney charged fifteen guineas for a three-quarter length, but he soon raised his price to eighteen guineas, at which it remained until 1781, when he asked twenty guineas. The large income that he earned at these moderate prices was the result of his rapid method of work. As a rule he painted a three-quarter length (when the hands were not introduced) in three sittings, the first lasting less than an hour, the second and third an hour and a half each. The only time that he could command during the busy season for

LORD THURLOW

painting works of imagination was in the intervals between his sitters, or when some fashionable dame failed to keep her appointment. Having a canvas at hand, he regarded such disappointments as a schoolboy regards a holiday. The finishing of his portraits should have occupied these intervals, but this, being irksome work, was too frequently postponed.

As soon as the artist was firmly established as a fashionable portrait-painter, efforts were made by Meyer, Angelica Kauffmann, and others, to induce him to exhibit at the Royal Academy, with a view to qualifying for election as a member. Romney, however, not only refused to send his pictures to the Academy, but persisted throughout his life in ignoring the very existence of the institution presided over by his rival. He seems to have adopted this course partly from a dread of adverse criticism, partly from a desire to show his enemies that he was able to stand alone. His contempt for academical honours cost him the favour of the Court, and of the more servile members of Court circles; but we are assured that "the more he reflected on the peculiarities of his own disposition, the more he was convinced that the comfort of his life and his advancement in art would be most effectually

promoted by his setting limits to his passion for popular applause, and confining the display of his works to his own domestic gallery." Hayley admits that he used every argument to dissuade his friend from exhibiting, believing that his connection with the Academy would bring him vexation and disquietude that he was ill fitted to bear. John Romney, with the asperity that marks all his allusions to his father's first biographer, declares that Hayley's real reason for dissuading Romney from exhibiting was to be found in the fact that he himself was not well-disposed towards the Court, and that consequently he did not wish his friend to be connected with an institution which was under the patronage of royalty. If Romney had become an academician, as his son points out, the public would have been made familiar with his works, and an accurate record would have been kept of them. As it was, his pictures were only seen by the persons who had the entrée to his private gallery, and, as soon as they were delivered to their owners, they were scattered about the country, their very existence, in some cases, being forgotten.

With all his faults and weaknesses, Hayley was certainly actuated by a sincere desire to serve his friend, though he was not averse to a

return in kind. Towards the end of 1779 he composed an Ode in honour of Howard the philanthropist, for which Romney made a design, engraved by Bartolozzi. In a letter addressed by Hayley to his wife in December, 1779, while he was spending a few days with Dr. Cotton, at St. Albans, there is an allusion to this work, and also to his friendly touting for the artist. "Dr. Cotton[1] is acquainted with Howard," he writes, "and I rehearsed my Ode by the Doctor's celebrated fireside. Both the physician and the philosopher [John Thornton] were infinitely pleased with it, and it has at least attained some reward, for it has induced Dr. Cotton to promise he will have his head painted by Romney, at our universal request. On this condition I read the Ode. Apropos of Romney! I have passed some hours with him, and he has promised to execute some designs for the said Ode, which he also admires exceedingly. So your Pindaric humble servant is of course *in the clouds*."

During his annual visits to Eartham, Romney displayed an eagerness for enterprise in the imaginative branch of his art which was stifled

[1] Dr. Nathaniel Cotton (1705-88), poet and physician. He had a private asylum at St. Albans, where Cowper was for a time under his care. His volume of *Visions in Verse* was once popular.

by his incessant portrait-painting in London. Hayley, according to his own account, possessed a talent for suggesting subjects suitable for pictorial treatment, and his artistic friends often invited him to the "chase of ideas." While Romney was his guest he was accustomed to lay aside his own immediate occupation for the pleasure of ransacking his books for subjects that might exercise the artist's powers. Innumerable sketches were made, both on paper and canvas, that were intended to serve as rough notes for the winter's work; but each winter brought so much new occupation in its train that the sketches were either neglected or forgotten. Among these designs Hayley mentions, with special admiration, a cartoon in crayon representing a Lapland witch surveying the sea from a rock, and exulting over a storm of her own raising. Another study, executed about this time, is based upon the story of the heroism of Woltemad,[1] who rescued with the help of his gallant steed, a number of sailors shipwrecked off the Cape of Good Hope. This picture was engraved by Caroline Watson for Hayley's *Life*, but it cannot be described as a favourable specimen of Romney's powers.

[1] Related in the *Travels* of Thunberg.

While the artist sat at work during these so-called holidays, his host read aloud to him, for the most part from books on painting. "He thought rather contemptuously," we are told, "of some applauded literary works relating to his own art, and particularly Fresnoy's[1] poem, translated into English prose by Dryden, and into rhyme by Mason. He said that in his early life the precepts of it had perplexed and misled him exceedingly. He was particularly pleased by my reading to him Italian books upon painting; the custom of reading these to him in English soon made me able to do so without hesitation, except in the long intricate sentences of Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*, whose anecdotes he delighted to hear. But of writers on art in Italian he was most gratified by the works of Mengs,[2] as they are published by his friend Azara. Another favourite book with him was the collection of letters written by eminent painters. I recollect that in reading a letter of Salvator

[1] Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy (1611–65), painter and poet. His best-known work is the one alluded to above, *De Arte Graphica*. The French translation was published under the title of *L'Ecole D'Uranie, ou l'art de la Peinture*.

[2] Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–79), painter and writer on art.

Rosa's, I said to him, 'Here, Romney, here Salvator has drawn your portrait as well as his own in a single short sentence — *tutto spirito, tutto fuoco, tutto bile,* all spirit, all fire, all bile.'"

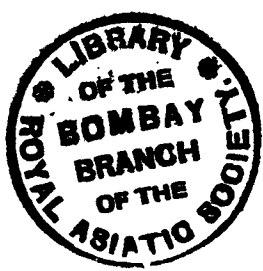
Hayley comments with regret upon the fact that Romney did not bequeath to the public such a series of historical pictures as might have been expected from a man of his genius. His enemies imputed the failure to two causes: first, to a lack of imagination, and secondly to avarice, which confined him to the more lucrative pursuit of portrait-painting. But Romney's love of fame was far stronger than his love of money, while he has left sufficient proof that he was gifted with a poetical imagination. Owing, however, to the defects of his early training, he never acquired complete mastery over anatomical difficulties, nor did he excel in the composition of large groups. He had painted faces so incessantly, and with so much success, that to paint a new face, particularly a pretty one, became one of his chief delights, and a temptation which he found it impossible to resist. "He delighted no less," we are assured, "in sketching scenes from fancy, and his invention had all the rapidity and fertility of a master; but he did

KATHERINE AND THOMAS CLAVERING

not equally love the less agreeable labour by which a figure rapidly invented must be slowly ripened into an accurate perfection of form. Hence, he produced innumerable portraits, and a multitude of imaginative sketches; but the hours he devoted to each left him insufficient time to produce many such works of studied invention as he most wished and intended to execute in the autumn of his life."

A more cogent reason than any of the above may probably be found in the apathy evinced by both patrons and public towards historical compositions by English artists. Northcote tells us that when West returned from Italy in 1763, and began painting large pictures in the heroic style, it was a matter for general surprise, since at that period there was scarcely any precedent in English art for a serious attempt at "history." Though his works were much admired, it was long before any patron thought of asking their price, or offering the artist a commission. One gentleman who was enthusiastic in his praise of West's "Death of Wolfe," was asked why he did not buy it. "What could I do with it if I had it?" he retorted. "You surely would not have me hang up a modern English picture in my house, unless it was a portrait." This

was the attitude of the art patron for many a long year to come, as Barry and Haydon found to their cost. He employed native artists to paint his womenkind, but when he wanted works of imagination, he bought old masters on the Continent. The historical painter's only hope lay in employment from royalty, or from the nation; but while the country was groaning under long and costly wars, her public buildings went unadorned. Fuseli declared that Romney was made for the times, and the times for Romney. "It is true," comments the artist's son, "that he was able to accommodate himself to the spirit and fashion of the times by painting fine portraits, but the times were not made for him, because his forte was imaginative painting, which, if he had pursued it, he might have painted in a prison."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CHAPTER VII

EMMA LYON.

Early life of Emma Lyon — Connection with Captain Willet Payne—Dr. Graham—Sir Harry Featherstonhaugh — Charles Greville — Emma's introduction to Romney—Series of portrait studies from "Mrs. Hart" —"Sensibility"—Sir William Hamilton—Secret agreement with Mr. Greville—Emma goes to Naples.

THE year 1782 marks the beginning of a new and important epoch in Romney's career, for in this year took place his first "official" introduction to Emma Lyon, afterwards Lady Hamilton. No chronicle of the painter's life, however brief, can be considered complete without at least a summary of the early career of his most notorious model. Emma, or Amy, as she was christened, was born at Great Neston, in Cheshire, about 1763.[1] On the death of her father, a working blacksmith, her mother returned to her native village of Hawarden, where by the help of her friends

[1] Some authorities give the date as 1765.

and relations she contrived to maintain herself and bring up her child. Here Emma received her scanty education, learning to read and write at the village school, though she never mastered the art of spelling, a trifling defect in those days of free-and-easy orthography.

At fourteen she went out to service, as nursemaid in the house of a Mr. Thomas,[1] the Hawarden doctor. Two years later she came to London, where she obtained a situation in the family of Dr. Budd, one of the physicians at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Emma does not appear to have kept her situations very long. From Dr. Budd's she went as housemaid to a tradesman in St. James's, and while there attracted the attention of a "lady of fashion," probably one of the customers, who engaged her as lady's-maid, but seems to have treated her rather as a companion than a servant, giving her pretty clothes, and allowing her to show off her talents for singing and mimicry to the frequenters of the house.

It was while in this situation that Emma, not yet eighteen, made her first false step, and it is characteristic of her that her fall was the

[1] Brother-in-law of Alderman Boydell, with whom Romney was afterwards connected through his contributions to the Shakespeare Gallery.

LADY HAMILTON AS "CONTEMPLATION"

By kind permission of Lieut.-Col. Sir Audley Neeld, Bart., M.P.

result of an act of disinterested good nature. One of her kinsmen having been seized by the press-gang, and carried on board a vessel in the Thames, whence it was feared by his family that he would be despatched on foreign service, Emma undertook to go to Captain, afterwards Admiral, Willet Payne, and beg that he would use his influence to obtain the young man's release. The captain granted her petition, but, moved by her uncommon beauty, became a suitor in his turn, and his pleading was only too successful. The result of a brief liaison was the birth of a daughter, named Emily, but generally alluded to as "little Emma." The connection was terminated by the departure of the sailor lover for his ship, and, as he appears to have made no provision for his mistress or her child, Emma found herself for a time in sorry case. The baby was despatched to its grandmother at Hawarden, and the young mother, as soon as she recovered her health and looks, entered the employment of the notorious quack, Dr. Graham, who had established his Temple of Health at Schomberg House, Pall Mall, in 1781.[1]

[1] "The fact of Emma's connection with this Exhibition stands uncontradicted; on the contrary, it is sup-

Dr. Graham, the son of an Edinburgh saddler, had taken a medical degree in his native city, and afterwards spent some time in America, where he posed as a philanthropic physician. His Temple of Health was first opened in the Adelphi in 1779, but on its removal to Pall Mall, a couple of years later, two new attractions were advertised — the famous Celestial Bed, for the sight of which half a guinea was charged, and the lovely Hebe, "the rosy Goddess of Health," who would exhibit in her own person "the all-blessing effects of virtue, temperance, regularity, simplicity, and moderation." This personification of Hebe, according to well-established tradition, was Emma Lyon, attired in classical costume. The beauty of the presiding goddess soon became noised abroad, with the result that Romney, Cosway, Flaxman, and other artists came to the Temple for the purpose of making studies from so perfect a model. Much ink and paper has been wasted over controversies concerning the connection between Romney and Emma Lyon, one party

ported by the testimony of Cosway, Tresham, and Hone, and the lovely drawings they made from her person." (Preface to the Catalogue of the Romney Exhibition at the Grafton Gallery, 1900–1, by Mr. Barrington Nash.)

LADY HAMILTON AS "THE SPINSTRESS."

asserting that the artist only cherished a platonic admiration for his beautiful model; the other, that the most intimate relations existed between them. No colour is given to the latter accusation by either Hayley or John Romney, who ascribe the first meeting of the pair to the year 1782, when Emma was living under the protection of Charles Greville. That their acquaintance dated from an earlier period seems, however, to be proved by a letter from Emma to Romney after she had become Lady Hamilton, wherein she observes that he had known her both in poverty and in prosperity. Although Greville was a man of moderate means, she never suffered from what she would have regarded as poverty after he had provided her with an establishment.

While engaged at the Temple of Health, it is supposed that Emma attracted the attention of Sir Harry Featherstonhaugh, a sporting baronet of doubtful reputation. At any rate, we next find her at his country place, Up Park, in Sussex, where for a short time she lived in luxury, and is said to have become an accomplished horsewoman. But in less than a year Sir Harry tired of his new toy, or, as some chroniclers have it, was disgusted by her extravagance and "giddy ways." Although she

was expecting shortly to give birth to a child, he dismissed her abruptly, presenting her with a sum only just sufficient to pay her travelling expenses home. On arriving at Hawarden, Emma found herself worse off than ever before. She had only a few shillings in her pocket; she was in debt to her dressmaker; and though her mother and grandmother received her kindly, she shrank from throwing upon them the burden of her support. Repeated appeals for help to Sir Harry were left unanswered, and at length, in despair, she wrote to Charles Greville, who had given her both advice and money in her Up Park days, and laid her pitiable case before him. "I am almost distrackted," wrote the unhappy girl. "I have never heard from Sir H. What shall I dow? Good God! what shall I dow? I have wrote seven letters, and no answer. I can't come to town 'caus' I am out of money. I have not a farthing to bless myself with, and I think my frends looks cooly on me. O Grevell, what shall I dow? what shall I dow?"

Charles Greville was the second son of the first Earl of Warwick, and brother of the second Earl, Romney's patron. Born in 1749, he seems to have been rather elderly for his

twenty-six years, prudent, pedantic, and a connoisseur of art. Though ostensibly a man about town, he was living quietly upon his income of five hundred a year, and looking forward either to a place under Government, or to the reversion of an estate belonging to his maternal uncle, Sir William Hamilton, Ambassador at the Court of Naples.

On receiving Emma's letter, which is signed with her adopted surname Hart, by which she became generally known, Greville sent her money for her travelling expenses, and requested her to return to London, where, if she would agree to his conditions, he promised to arrange for her future. On her arrival in town, he held a solemn interview with her, in which he laid down the terms upon which she might hope to enjoy his protection and patronage. Reminding her of her "giddiness" in the Up Park days, he explained that the durability of their connection must depend upon her perfect loyalty, truthfulness, and good faith. As a poor man he could only provide her with a modest establishment, but, believing that she had talent and ambition, he would give her the opportunity for self-improvement. If she would consent to lead a quiet, simple life in his company, keeping strictly within her allowance. and devoting her

energies to self-education and her domestic duties, he would do his best to make her happy. Not a word of love or of passion in the whole compact, but in truth Greville seems to have regarded Emma much as if she were a beautiful work of art which he desired, to add to his collection.

Emma, immensely impressed by Greville's goodness and wisdom, joyfully accepted his conditions, and the curiously assorted pair settled down in a small house in the Edgware Road, where Emma was allowed two maid-servants—her mother acted as cook-house-keeper—and twenty pounds a year for pin money. She was also given masters for music and singing, while Greville charged himself with the maintenance of "little Emma." Of the child that she was expecting when she returned to London, we hear no more, the supposition being that it died at the time of its birth, or else that it was provided for by its reputed father. Emma seems to have carried out her share of the domestic agreement creditably enough, though she occasionally received a "scolding" from her protector for some act of girlish folly or extravagance.

In the early part of 1782 Greville took his lovely *protégée* to Romney's studio, and, at the

artist's request, permitted her to sit to him for a series of fancy pictures. Mrs. Hart, as she was now called, was just nineteen, and in the full bloom of beauty and happiness. She was devoted to her lover, at ease about the future, and had experienced a return of self-respect in consequence of the comparative regularity of her present connection. It is scarcely necessary to dwell upon the details of her fascinations, since her auburn hair, her brilliant colouring, her perfect mouth, and her girlish grace have been immortalised for us by a master hand. Hayley, in his account of this period, observes that Romney now had "the great advantage of studying the features and the mental character of a lady on whom Nature had lavished such beauty and such extraordinary talents as have rendered her not only the favourite model of Romney, but the idolised wife of an accomplished ambassador." John Romney states that Mrs. Hart conducted herself with great propriety while she was under the protection of Mr. Greville, and that in all his father's intercourse with her she was treated with the utmost respect. "It was a great gratification to her to sit as a model," he adds. "It amused her, and flattered her vanity. From the peculiarity of her situation

she was excluded from society, and the only resources she had were reading, music, and sitting for her portrait."

Between the years 1782 and 1786 Romney painted his "divine lady," as he called her, in a variety of characters and attitudes—as Nature, as Circe, as a Bacchante, and as Sensibility, to mention only a few of the best known—and he seems to have derived inspiration from his beautiful model, since his studies of her, painted for his own pleasure, are distinguished by a higher degree of picturesqueness and originality than the portraits that were executed in the ordinary course of his profession, a result which must be attributed in part to Emma's extraordinary aptitude for the rôle of model. "She had exquisite taste," we are assured, "and such expressive power as could furnish to an historical painter an inspiring model for the various characters, either delicate or sublime, that he might have occasion to represent. Romney delighted in observing the wonderful command she possessed over her eloquent features, and through the surprising vicissitudes of her destiny she ever took a generous pride in serving him as a model; her peculiar force and variations of feeling, countenance, and gesture,

LADY HAMILTON AS "SENSIBILITY"

inspirited and ennobled the productions of his art."

One of the most beautiful pictures painted by Romney from Emma Hart at this period is that known as "Sensibility, or the Sensitive Plant," the subject of which was suggested by Hayley, who himself borrowed the idea from his own poem, *The Triumphs of Temper*. "During my visit to Romney in November," he relates, "I found him contemplating a recently painted head, on a small canvas. I expressed my admiration of the unfinished work in the following terms: 'This is a most happy beginning; you never painted a female head with such exquisite expression; you have only to enlarge your canvas, introduce the shrub mimosa growing in a vase, with a hand of this figure approaching the leaves, and you may call your picture a personification of "Sensibility."' 'I like your suggestion,' replied the painter, 'and will enlarge my canvas immediately.' 'Do so,' I answered, 'and without loss of time I will hasten to an eminent nurseryman at Hammersmith, and bring you the most beautiful plant I can find that may suit your purpose.'" The connection between this work and his own poem led Hayley to covet the picture, and shortly

after it was finished he consented to part with one of his farms for a fair market price, plus the "Sensibility," for which the purchaser was to pay a hundred pounds. A century later the same picture sold for three thousand pounds at a public auction.

About the end of 1785 Mr. Greville, whose affairs had become seriously embarrassed, was thinking of mending his fortunes by marriage with an heiress. He was anxious to provide comfortably for Emma, when the inevitable separation took place, and while her fate, all unknown to herself, hung in the balance, Sir William Hamilton arrived from Naples. Sir William, a well-preserved widower of fifty-five, an ardent sportsman, a connoisseur of art, and a passionate admirer of beauty, had returned to England with some idea of finding a second wife. He was greatly struck by the charm and talents of his nephew's mistress, and perceiving the effect that Emma had produced, Greville, who had no desire that his uncle should marry again, thought he saw a way out of his difficulties. He confided his embarrassments to Sir William, as well as the necessity that he was under of parting with Emma, and gave her an excellent character for conduct, intelligence, and temper. The

bait thus thrown out was eagerly swallowed, and it was finally arranged that in consideration of Sir William taking upon himself the responsibility for his nephew's debts, Emma should be transferred to his protection. Since it was necessary to keep this transaction a secret from the girl herself, she was merely told that Sir William had invited her to go with her mother to Naples for a few months, in order that she might study music and singing under the best masters, while Greville arranged his affairs with his creditors. Fully believing her lover's assurance that he would join her in Italy as soon as his business was settled, Emma consented to leave for Naples about the middle of April, 1786.

It was not long before the girl discovered that she had not been invited to Italy solely for the purpose of artistic improvement. But her heart was still in England, and not all Sir William's blandishments could shake her loyalty to Greville, to whom she wrote innumerable letters of pathetic appeal. "I live but in the hope of seeing you," she declares in one of these epistles. "Remember you will never be loved by anybody like your affectionate and sincere Emma. Pray, for God's sake, wright to me, and come to me, for Sir

William shall not be anything to me but your friend." For some time Greville took no notice of her letters, but when at length he did write it was to advise her to yield to his uncle's solicitations. In a storm of wounded feeling she replies: "As to what you write to me to oblidge Sir William, I will not answer you. If I was with you, I would murder you and myself both. . . . It is not to your interest to disoblidge me, for you don't know the power I have hear. Only I will never be his mistress. If you affront me, I will make him marry me." But penniless and practically alone in a strange land, Emma was powerless to resist the pressure that was brought to bear upon her. A few months later she was living under the protection of Sir William, and it was five years before she crossed Romney's path again.

CHAPTER VIII

A NEW PROSPECT OF FAME

Holidays at Eartham—Some famous sitters—A splendid income—Mode of life—Influence on contemporary fashions—Alderman Boydell and the Shakespeare Gallery—Romney's interest in the enterprise—The shackles of portrait-painting.

IT now becomes necessary to take up the thread of Romney's personal history at the date of his introduction to Emma Hart. In the summer of this year, 1782, Miss Seward[1] was his fellow-guest at Eartham, and we are assured that he greatly admired the Swan of Lichfield for her poetical talents and her sprightly conversation. He also respected her for the filial tenderness with which she spoke of her father, then a helpless invalid, and in order to gratify the old man, he began a portrait of her, which, after long delay, was

[1] Anna Seward, born in 1747, died in 1809. Her best-known works were *Louisa*, a novel in verse, a Monologue on the death of Captain Cook, and a volume of Sonnets.

finished and sent to Lichfield. The party at Eartham was almost invariably of the nature of a mutual admiration society, but never was the flattery so fulsome as when Miss Seward and Hayley tried to out-compliment each other. The Bard of Eartham declared that the Muse of Lichfield was Pope in petticoats, while the Muse of Lichfield vowed that the Bard of Eartham possessed the fire and invention of Dryden, without any of his absurdity.

Romney, of course, came in for his share of compliments, the title of Raphael being conferred upon him, a title that must have done some hurt to his modesty. "When the party assembled at breakfast," to quote Allan Cunningham's amusing description, "the ordinary greetings were Sappho, Pindar, and Raphael; they asked for bread and butter in quotations, and 'still their speech was song.' They then separated for some hours. Poetasters, male and female, retired, big with undelivered verses; and Romney proceeded to sketch from the lines of Hayley. When the hour appointed for taking the air came, the painter went softly to the door of the poetess, opened it gently, and if he found her 'with looks all staring from Parnassian dreams,' he shut it and retreated. If, on the

contrary, she was unemployed, he said, 'Come, Muse,' and she answered, 'Coming, Raphael.'" On Romney's departure Miss Seward and Hayley presented him with copies of verses in return for the portraits that he had painted of them. It was fortunate that the painter was inclined to underestimate his work, or he might have considered the reward inadequate.

During the next two or three years Romney's time was fully occupied between his portrait-painting and the series of imaginative studies that he was making from Emma Hart. Among his sitters were Lord Chatham and Mr. Pitt, Lady Russell, the two Miss Thurlows (illegitimate daughters of the Chancellor), Lord Derby, Dr. Barrington, Bishop of Salisbury, David Hartley, the Minister Plenipotentiary for settling the terms of peace with America, and the great Mr. Gibbon. The last-named, by no means an inspiring subject for artistic treatment, was then (1784) in his forty-sixth year, and had published the first volume of his famous work seven years before. Painter and historian, who owed their introduction to Hayley, were mutually attracted, and the portrait is described as delicately exact in resemblance and truth of character.

The autumn of 1784 was spent as usual at

Eartham, where Romney interested himself in the decoration of a new library that his host was fitting up. The youthful Flaxman, then just nineteen, was a fellow-guest; and Romney, who had patronised the young sculptor in his boyish days, now employed him to model a bust of Hayley. Flaxman always declared that the kind encouragement he had received from Romney contributed not a little towards making him an artist. The same friend recommended him to visit Italy, and offered him pecuniary help towards the completion of his studies.

In 1785 Romney's professional earnings amounted to between three and four thousand pounds, a splendid income in those days. At this time his prices were eighty guineas for a whole-length, forty for a half-length, and twenty for a head. In order to make so large an income at such low charges he was obliged to take four or five sitters a day, and often to paint for thirteen hours out of the twenty-four. One of his pupils, Mr. Robinson, of Windermere, has left the following account of the manner in which Romney spent his working day, while at the height of his celebrity:—

"He generally rose between seven and eight o'clock, and walked to Gray's Inn to break-

TITANIA, PUCK AND THE CHANGELING

fast; on his return, while his servant was dressing his hair, he was employed in drawing, with which he amused himself till ten o'clock, the hour at which he always had a sitter appointed. His number of sitters was three, four, and sometimes five. At noon he took broth or coffee, and dined at four in the most simple manner. After dinner he walked into the country, and always had his sketch-book, in which new thoughts were slightly marked. On his return home he had again recourse to his portfolio, and amused himself with the design he had worked on in the morning till twelve o'clock, when he retired to rest. This was his custom without any variation, except when it rained, while I remained with him."

Romney often lamented the fetters of his profession, but he found it impossible to shake them off. Still ardently bent, in the midst of his portrait-painting, upon composing historical or poetical pictures, he was continually urging his literary friends to send him suggestions for subjects. Mickle, translator of the *Lusiad*,[1]

[1] W. J. Mickle (1735-88) published his translation of Camoens' *Os Lusiadas* in 1775. He also wrote a *Life of Camoens*, and a *History of the Discovery of India*. He is now best remembered as the author of the Ballad "Cumnor Hall," introduced into *Kenilworth*.

and Dr. Potter,[1] translator of the Greek tragedies, were among his most valued contributors. Romney greatly appreciated Potter's renderings from Æschylus, whom he called the Painter's Poet. About this time, or a little earlier, he executed the fine cartoons in crayon of the "Ghost of Darius" and "Atossa's Dream," which won the enthusiastic admiration of the critical Warton.

To so sensitive and sincere an artist portrait-painting, though easy and lucrative, was not an unmixed pleasure. Easily influenced by stronger wills, and deficient in the tact that stood Sir Joshua in such good stead, Romney found it difficult to manage his sitters, who frequently imposed upon his patience and good nature. For example, we learn that the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire gave him three sittings, with long intervals between each. At each sitting he began a new portrait, not one of which was he allowed the opportunity of finishing. Isabella, Duchess of Rutland, whom he had painted in her youth, came to him ten years later, and requested him to repaint the

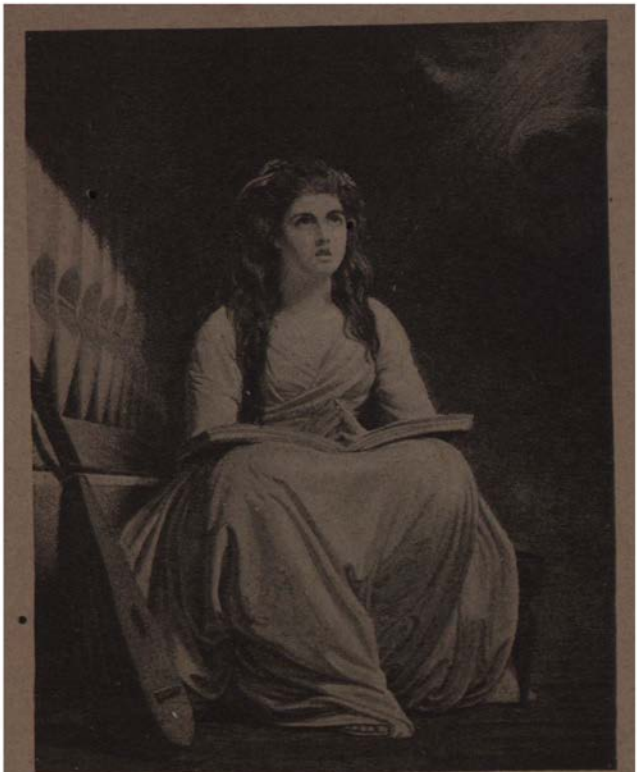
[1] Robert Potter (1721–1804), Master of Scarning School, Norfolk. He translated the works of the Greek tragedians, and presented them to Thurlow, who in return made him Canon of Norwich. Romney painted his portrait (as a gift) in 1770.

face, making it resemble her as she then was. She sat once for the alteration, but came no more, and the portrait was spoiled.

In one respect Romney insensibly influenced his feminine sitters. During the early part of his practice it was the custom for ladies to wear stiff, long-waisted bodices and huge erections of powdered hair, decorated with ribbons, flowers, and feathers. Sir Joshua, most adaptable of mortals, so far from attempting to modify the uncouth head-dresses of his day, professed to admire them, declaring that they afforded an opportunity for effects in light and shade. Romney, on the other hand, whenever the style and disposition of dress was left to his own taste, discarded all exaggerated encumbrances, persuading his sitters to wear simple white gowns, with a scarf or fichu over the shoulders, and a broad-leafed hat or a Pamela cap upon their heads. With Emma Hart he was allowed a free hand, and the admiration roused by his portraits of her, more especially after she became Lady Hamilton, led to the gradual change of fashion, the stiff stay-bodice giving way to a flowing graceful style, which more nearly approached the Grecian model.

In 1786 a new prospect of employment for

painters of historical or poetical pictures was opened up by Alderman Boydell's scheme of forming a Shakespeare Gallery. The idea, according to Hayley, originated in Romney's parlour, being the outcome of an animated conference between the alderman and the painter. John Boydell (1719–1805), who was said by Northcote to have done more in his day for the advancement of the arts in England than the whole mass of the nobility put together, began business in a very small way in 1745 by publishing sets of "views," which he sold for sixpence a set. At the end of ten years he had amassed sufficient capital to start in a more substantial way of business as a publisher of prints and engravings. Hitherto he had bought most of his prints in France, paying hard cash for them, since the French took none in exchange. At length the happy thought occurred to him of commissioning works from English artists for the purpose of engravings. From one of his early ventures, West's "Death of Wolfe," he cleared £1,500, and very shortly he was in a position to exchange prints with French publishers. During his career the foreign trade in prints changed from an import to an export one, and his enterprise spread the fame of British engravers on the Continent.



LADY HAMILTON AS "ST. CECILIA"

By the year 1786 Boydell had made a large fortune out of the works of English artists, and he professed to be delighted at the notion of extending his commercial prospects through the advancement of national glory. Romney was no less attracted by the opportunity now held out to him of devoting his powers to some recognised object in the higher branches of his art. He was of opinion that English artists ought to show their public spirit by working for a Shakespeare Gallery at moderate prices, and himself named comparatively small sums for pictures of large size and ambitious subjects. At a dinner given by Josiah Boydell, the alderman's nephew, at which Romney, Hayley, West, and other artists or art-patrons were present, the scheme was further discussed, and it was decided to publish serially engravings from the pictures that were exhibited in the gallery. On the same occasion Hayley drew up a preliminary prospectus entitled "The First Sketch of a Project to encourage Historical Painting in this Kingdom, and to render at the same time a National Tribute to the Genius of Shakespeare." The paper concludes with the announcement that the first number of the publication would contain the plays of *Macbeth* and *As You Like It*, the four

designs being contributed by Reynolds, West, Romney, and Copley.

It appears that Sir Joshua was at first reluctant to join in the enterprise, but on being pressed, made his own terms, viz. a thousand guineas for a design from *Macbeth*. West was paid the same sum for his picture from *King Lear;* while Romney only asked six hundred guineas for his large work, *The Tempest*, and presented the Boydells with his picture of "The Infant Shakespeare surrounded by the Passions." His mind, we are told, was thrown into great agitation by the new career that seemed to be opening before him. As has been seen, he had long desired to win distinction as an historical painter, and he was strongly attracted by the idea of painting scenes from Shakespeare, for whose works he professed an enthusiastic appreciation. Like many artists, however, he was a desultory reader, and could hardly bring himself to read at one sitting two consecutive acts of the dramas that he most admired. "Before you paint Shakespeare, Mr. Romney," said his outspoken patron, Lord Thurlow, "for God's sake read him." And the advice does not seem to have been altogether superfluous.

In a letter addressed to Hayley in February,

THE INFANT SHAKESPEARE SURROUNDED BY THE PASSIONS

1787, Romney makes allusion to his Shakespearean enterprise, the prospective difficulties of which were already oppressing his anxious mind. "I have now entered upon a new plan," he writes, "and must fight through it with all my might. Do not think I despair! but I find it necessary to gather all the assistance I can collect from my friends, as I have so very little time either to think or read for myself. This cursed portrait-painting. How I am shackled with it! I am determined to live frugally, that I may enable myself to cut it short as soon as I am tolerably independent, and then give myself up to those delightful regions of the imagination."

CHAPTER IX

WORK FOR THE SHAKESPEARE GALLERY

Picture from *The Tempest* begun—Difficulties of the work—Some remarkable portraits—Miss Seward—Completion of "The Tempest"—The "Infant Shakespeare"—Visit to Paris with Hayley and Carwardine—Lord Gower—Madame de Genlis—Garden studio at Eartham—Depression of spirits—Reappearance of "Emma."

IN the summer of 1787 Romney escaped from his fashionable sitters earlier than usual, and fled to Eartham, where alone he could find leisure to compose the first design for his Shakespearean work. The covered riding-school was given up to his use, and in this retreat he began to meditate on the various pictures from Shakespeare which he hoped to produce, and here he formed on a large canvas the first sketch of his scene from *The Tempest*. For a man who had spent the best years of his life in painting portraits, the attempt to fill a vast canvas with a large

number of figures, all moved by vehement agitation, was so formidable an undertaking that it is hardly surprising to read that "the intense desire of executing a very grand and sublime picture, and the apprehension of failing in the attempt, created many a 'tempest in the fluctuating spirits of Romney."

In the following year the artist limited the number of his sitters, and made a rule that he would receive no one before twelve o'clock, in order that he might devote the best part of the morning to his great work. Still the picture proceeded but slowly, nearly three years being required for its completion. While engaged upon it, Romney suffered from a severe illness, and after his recovery took a lodging at Hampstead, sleeping there each night, and returning to Cavendish Square in the early morning. He was accustomed, as has been already noted, to work with ease and rapidity, but he found himself almost overmastered by the magnitude of the task he had now undertaken. In the first instance he had sketched out a design representing Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban on the island, with the shipwreck in the background, which is said to have been effective and harmonious as a composition. Unfortunately it was suggested by some

officious adviser that the picture would not be regarded as an historical composition, because it only consisted of three figures, not sufficiently combined. Thereupon, Romney, always easily influenced, diminished the canvas on one side, thus excluding Caliban, and enlarged it on the other, so as to bring the shipwreck into the foreground. "By this alteration," observes his son, "he endeavoured to unite two principal actions, which were essentially distinct, with the result that what he had intended to effect with but little labour, proved to be a source of endless toil, a struggle with impossibilities; and he could have painted three historical pictures on any other subjects in less time and with less effort."

Among the distinguished persons who sat to Romney during the seasons of 1788 and 1789 were the Duchess of Cumberland, Mrs. Fitzherbert, the two Miss Beckfords, Dr. Parr, Dr. Paley, John Wesley, and Dr. Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury; while the portrait of Miss Seward was at last finished, and despatched to Lichfield. In a letter to Hayley, dated June 1st, 1788, the Muse describes the delight which the arrival of the long-promised treasure had caused. "It arrived late last night," she writes, "rich, adorned and invalu-

able by the Romneyan powers. My poor invalid was fast asleep in his bed. Lister and Cary,[1] our young bards, were supping with me. They were on fire with curiosity, while the nails were drawing, and highly gratified with contemplating the most masterly portrait their young eyes had ever beheld. I placed it at my father's bedside at seven this morn. He wept with joy when I undrew the curtain — and wanted to kiss it, and has talked and looked at it all day. I send some verses to Romney by this post, which but ill express my gratitude."

These verses describe the above scene in minute detail, down to "The heaved transmission of each tardy nail!" In the accompanying letter the "poetess" relates how "Everybody here who, as yet, have seen the picture, think it more pleasing than the first, and more like me, from having that smile which, they say, is habitual to my countenance —also from the hair being more gracefully disposed. Of the likeness I must leave other people to judge, but of the exquisite excellence as a portrait, supposing I knew nothing of the original, I cannot but be conscious."

[1] Afterwards the Rev. Henry Cary, translator of Dante (1772-1841).

It was not until the spring of 1790 that the picture from *The Tempest* was completed. On April 21st of that year the artist wrote to Hayley, in evident relief at having accomplished his difficult task: "Your kindness in rejoicing so heartily at the birth of my picture has given me great satisfaction. There has been an anxiety labouring in my mind the greater part of the last twelvemonth. At times it had nearly overwhelmed me. I thought I should have absolutely sunk in despair. Oh, what a kind friend is in those times. I thank God (whatever my picture may be) I can say thus much: I am a greater philosopher and a better Christian." Romney seems to have felt comfortably assured that his work was on the whole a success, though he was not ignorant of its defects — defects arising from his imperfect technical training. The individual figures, more especially those of Prospero and Miranda, are finely conceived and drawn, but the composition of the whole group is confused, the sinking vessel with its terrified crew being strangely mixed up with the island from which the magician and his daughter are regarding the scene.

Still the picture found many admirers, chief among them the faithful Cumberland, who in

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his periodical, *The Observer*, printed what professed to be a translation from a Greek fragment dealing with a classical exhibition of pictures. Reynolds, West, and Romney were described under the titles of Apelles, Parrhasius, and Timanthes, and some account was given of their Shakespearean works. Of Timanthes the essayist observes: "This modest painter, though residing in the capital of Attica, lived in such retirement from society, and was so absolutely devoted to his art, that even his person was scarce known to his competitors. Envy never drew a word from his lips to the disparagement of a contemporary, and emulation could hardly provoke his diffidence into a contest for fame, which so many bolder minds were prepared to dispute."

Three other works by Romney were exhibited in the Shakespeare Gallery during the next few years, namely, the "Cassandra" (from Lady Hamilton), "The Infant Shakespeare surrounded by the Passions," and "The Infant Shakespeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy." Several more works were sketched out, but were never sufficiently advanced to be sent to the gallery. Romney presently discovered, much to his annoyance, that other artists of his own standing were being paid nearly double as

much as himself, and became convinced that it was the Boydells' intention to employ the established masters no longer than was necessary to give an impetus to the undertaking, purposing to complete it by the works of young artists at low prices. When he perceived, further, that extraordinary haste was being made to bring the exhibition to a conclusion, so that, instead of having some attractive novelties each year to keep alive public interest, nearly the whole display was made at once, he ceased to contribute, and turned his attention to other objects.

In 1790 Lord Gower (afterwards Lord Stafford, and created Duke of Sutherland in 1833), one of Romney's most liberal patrons, was appointed Ambassador to the Court of Louis XVI. His chaplain was Dr. Warner,[1] the eccentric cleric who figures so largely in George Selwyn's correspondence. He was a popular member of the Eartham set, and at his urgent desire, Hayley, Romney, and the Rev.

[1] The Rev. John Warner, D.D. (1736–1800), was for some years a popular preacher at his private chapel in Long Acre. In 1771 he became rector of Hockcliffe and Chalgrave, Beds, and later was given the rich living of Stourton, Wilts. He published a work called *Metronariston*, but he is now chiefly remembered as the friend and correspondent of George Selwyn.

Thomas Carwardine agreed to join him for a few weeks in Paris. The three friends set out from Eartham on July 31st, 1790, and travelled by way of Brighton and Dieppe to Paris, where Dr. Warner had engaged rooms for them at the Hotel Modene. On August 5th Romney wrote to his son, now a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge :—

"Paris is quiet, though they are apprehensive that our preparations for war are against them. The news just arrived from Spain will, I hope, stop that apprehension. I should have written to you before I left England, had I had time ; as I knew it would give you pleasure to hear that Prince William has sat to me ; and that the Prince of Wales has been at my house, and admired the picture of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and told me he would sit to me when he returned from Brighton. . . . The people here are still gay and good-humoured, but not so fantastic as they were ; indeed, it is a pleasant place to live in when a man wishes to dissipate. . . . We have been delighted with the performances at the theatre, especially by the women. They are far before us ; it is astonishing how exquisitely some of the women act, especially in comedy. I wish I could say Mrs. Jordan was on a par with some of them. I

cannot help reflecting that the minds of a people, and I may say their morals too, become almost entirely changed when daily habituated to public spectacles and rendezvous ; it is viewing Nature through a false medium, which warps and often destroys those delicate feelings that grow up with us, and are the basis of true happiness."

The ambassador and his wife, Lady Sutherland, afterwards known as the "Countess Duchess," showed the most polite attentions to Romney and his friends, invited them to dinner, and introduced them to some of the most distinguished foreign artists. Among his French contemporaries Romney was most strongly attracted by David, Le Brun, and Greuze. The splendours of the Rubens at the Luxembourg did not blind him, we are told, to the merits of David's "Death of Socrates" or Le Brun's series of the "Battles of Alexander."

A copy of verses by Hayley introduced the party to Madame de Genlis,[1] then governess to the children of the Duke of Orleans. "To this lady," writes the Bard, "our party

[1] Madame Sillery de Genlis, *née* Ducrest (1746–1830), had been appointed governess of the Duke of Orleans' children in 1782. In the same year she published her most popular work, *Adèle et Théodore, ou lettres sur l'education.*

was indebted for everything that politeness, benevolence, and graceful talents could accomplish in promoting the wishes of three strangers in her country. . . . She entertained us in a variety of scenes, in the Couvent de la Belle Chasse, where she resided, and in the Villa of Rancy. Her engaging disciples of both sexes added to the charm of her society. Romney was highly pleased with the sprightly benevolence of this admirable lady, and at a future period, when she visited London, he drew a rapid yet faithful sketch of her animated features."

On the return of the travellers to Eartham, Romney found a new painting-room prepared for him, which he had desired might be built within the riding-school at his own expense. The apartment had accommodation for pictures on a heroic scale, and here the artist hoped to execute some of the grand works of imagination which his brain had already conceived. At this time, however, he was indisposed and out of spirits after the heat and bustle of Paris, and, finding himself unable to work in the country, he was anxious to be at home again. Almost all his afflictions, Hayley avers, were imaginary, the result of hypochondria and nervous depression. While suffering from

these disorders he laboured under a dread that his talents were deserting him, and in a letter written about this period, he actually hints at giving up his beloved profession. "In all probability," he writes, "if my health be not equally good, I shall leave off business and go abroad, but it will be a year or two before I can settle my future plans."

This intense dejection continued through the spring of 1791, though it did not prevent the sufferer from painting the two beautiful pictures of "The Infant Shakespeare" for the Boydell Gallery. But a joyful surprise was preparing for him, which, temporarily at least, dispelled the morbid melancholia that so long had clouded his life. Three years earlier, in 1788, Romney had received a letter from Greville, in which the writer had expressed a rather belated desire to "settle up" for the pictures of Emma Hart, commissioned by himself and Sir William Hamilton. "I heard last week from Mrs. Hart," he continued. "She desired me to tell you that she hoped to captivate you by her voice next spring, and that few things interest her more than the remembrance which you and Mr. Hayley honour her with." But two springs had passed away without bringing Mrs. Hart, and it was

THE INFANT SHAKESPEARE NURSED BY TRAGEDY AND COMEDY

not until the beginning of June, 1791, that the "divine lady," attired in Turkish costume, and accompanied by Sir William Hamilton, walked into Romney's studio, and transformed his gloom into sunshine by the alchemy of her beauty, her gay spirits, and her eagerness to serve him as a model.

CHAPTER X

LADY HAMILTON

Emma's new prospects—Her eagerness to act as model—A second flowering time—"Cassandra" and other portrait studies—Emma's social success—Her marriage to Sir William Hamilton—Her confidential letter to Romney—His reply.

EMMA HART had come to England to be married to Sir William Hamilton, over whom she had now obtained complete ascendency. She would no longer tolerate the slights to which her anomalous position exposed her, even in the lax society of Naples, and she believed, in the innocence of her heart, that this tardy legalisation of her union would allow of her presentation to Queen Charlotte, give her the right of entrance into the most exclusive circles, and enable her to take her place as ambassadress at the Court of Naples. But all these prospective glories did not render her neglectful of her old friends; and one of her first visits, after her arrival in London, was

EMMA, LADY HAMILTON

From the picture in the National Portrait Gallery

to Romney's studio. Throwing herself into the painter's arms, she told him the joyful news of her approaching marriage, and assured him that all the time she could spare from her preparations she would gladly place at his service. In thus offering to return for a brief space to her old occupation of model, it is probable that she was not actuated solely by disinterested kindness. She was quite clever enough to realise that her beauty could not last for ever, and to appreciate the immortality that Romney's pencil could confer upon it.

Whatever the motive, the result of her good nature was a return of serenity to the artist's soul, and an increase of fertility in his genius. At the age of fifty-seven, thanks to Emma's inspiration, he enjoyed a second "flowering time," not less rich in creative loveliness than the first. Writing to Hayley on June 19th, he says: "At present, and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the divine lady. I cannot give her any other epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales. She says she must see you before she leaves England, which will be in the beginning of September. She asked me if you would not write my life.

I told her you had begun it; then she said she hoped you would have much to say of her in the life, as she prided herself upon being my model. So you see I must be in London till the time she leaves town."

On July 7th he writes again to the same correspondent: "I dedicate my time to this charming lady; there is a prospect of her leaving town with Sir William for two or three weeks. They are very much hurried at present, as everything is going on for their speedy marriage, and all the world following her and talking of her, so that if she had not more good sense than vanity her brain must be turned. The pictures I have begun are Joan of Arc, a Magdalen, and a Bacchante for the Prince of Wales; and another I am to begin as a companion to the Bacchante. I am also to paint a picture of Constance for the Shakespeare Gallery."

This forecast proved not altogether accurate. Mrs. Hart was painted as Cassandra, instead of Constance, for the Shakespeare Gallery, and the "Joan" was never finished, but Hayley was so deeply impressed by the latter work, even in its incomplete form, that he wrote a sonnet to prove that the Maid was compensated for all her sufferings by the beauty of this imaginary

portrait. The Bard explains that his frequent poetical tributes were intended to support and encourage his friend, since "it was a maxim with Romney that every modest and diffident artist ought to have almost a daily portion of cheering applause. He considered honest and temperate praise as the aliment of genius. . . . Even a shadow of coldness in the deportment of a person from whom he expected great cordiality of regard, could almost paralyse his powers as a painter."

A coolness, real or imaginary, in the "deportment" of his divine lady about this time nearly broke the painter's heart, and seemed in a fair way to paralyse his powers. On August 8th, he wrote to Hayley:—

"In my last letter I think I informed you that I was going to dine with Sir William Hamilton and his lady. In the evening of that day there were collected several people of fashion to hear her sing. She performed both in the serious and the comic to admiration, both in singing and acting; but her Nina surpasses everything I ever saw, and, I believe, as a piece of acting, nothing ever surpassed it. The whole company were in an agony of sorrow. Her acting is simple, grand, terrible, and pathetic. My mind was so much heated that I was for

running down to Eartham to fetch you up to see her. But alas! soon after, I thought I discovered an alteration in her conduct to me. A coldness and neglect seemed to have taken the place of her repeated declarations of regard for me. They left town to make many visits in the country. I expect them again the latter end of this week, when my anxiety (for I have suffered much) will be either relieved or increased, as I find her conduct. It is highly probable that none of the pictures will be finished, except I find her more friendly than she appeared to me the last time I saw her. . . . You will see everything is in great uncertainty, but it may turn out better than I expect."

The ever-ready Hayley, who regarded his own poetry as a panacea for every ill, at once sent off a couple of propitiatory stanzas, which he suggested that Romney might present to his divinity over his own signature. It does not appear that the artist made any use of these verses; indeed, by the time he received them the cloud had passed away without poetic intervention. On August 29th he wrote in recovered spirits:—

"Cassandra came to town on the 16th, and I did not see her till the 20th, so you may suppose how my feelings must have suffered.

CASSANDRA

She appointed to sit on the 23rd, and has been sitting almost every day since; and means to sit once or twice a day till she leaves London. When she arrived to sit she seemed more friendly than she had been, and I began a picture of her as a present for her mother. I was very successful with it, for it is thought the most beautiful head I have painted of her yet. Now, indeed, I think she is as cordial with me as ever; and she laments very much that she is to leave England without seeing you. I take it exceedingly kind in you to enter so deeply into my distresses. Really my mind had suffered so very much, that my health was much affected, and I was afraid I should not have power to have painted any more from her; but since she has assumed her former kindness, my health and spirits are quite recovered. She performed in my house last week, singing and acting before the nobility with most astonishing powers; she is the talk of the whole town, and really surpasses everything, both in singing and acting, that ever appeared. Gallini offered her two thousand pounds a year, and two benefits, if she would engage with him, on which Sir William said pleasantly that he had engaged her for life."

On September 6th, 1791, Emma Hart was married to Sir William Hamilton at Marylebone Church. Her ladyship's triumph was now complete in all respects save one—the Queen refused to receive her at Court, though it was rumoured that the most powerful influence had been brought to bear upon Her Majesty to induce her to relax her strictness. The couple returned to Italy shortly after their marriage, and on her way through Paris Lady Hamilton was cordially received by Marie Antoinette. A few weeks after her arrival at Naples Emma wrote a long and confidential letter to her painter friend, which is worth quoting in full, partly because it throws a light upon the vexed question of their former intimacy, and partly because it proves how considerable was the proportion of gold in the strangely mingled nature of the woman whom Romney worshipped :—

"CASERTA, *December 20th*, 1791.

"My dear Friend,—I have the pleasure to inform you we arrived safe at Naples. I have been received with open arms by all the Neapolitans of both sexes, and by all the foreigners of every distinction. I have been presented to the Queen of Naples by her own

desire. She as shown me all sorts of kind and affectionate attentions. In short, I am the happiest woman in the world. Sir William is fonder of me every day, and I hope he will have no cause to repent what he as done; for I feel so grateful to him that I think I shall never be able to make him amends for his goodness to me. But why do I tell you this? you know me enough. You was the first dear friend I opened my heart to. You ought to know me, for you have seen and discoursed with me in my poorer days. You have known me in poverty and prosperity, and I had no occasion to have lived for years in poverty and distress if I had not felt something of virtue in my mind. Oh, my dear Friend! for a time I own through distress virtue was vanquished. But my sense of virtue was not overcome. How grateful now, then, do I feel to my dear, dear husband, that as restored peace to my mind, that as given me honer, rank, and what is more, innocence and happiness. Rejoice with me, my dear Sir, my friend, my more than father. Believe me, I am still that Emma you knew me. If I could forget for a moment what I was, I ought to suffer. Command me in anything I can do for you here. Believe me, I shall have a real pleasure. Come to

Naples, and I will be your model—anything to induce you to come, that I may have an opportunity to shew my gratitude to you. Take care of your health for all our sakes. How does the pictures go on? Has the Prince been to you? Write to me. I am interested in all that concerns you. God bless you, my dear Friend. I spoke to Lady Southerland[1] about you; she loves you dearly. Give my love to Mr. Hayley. Tell him I shall be glad to see him at Naples.

"As you was so good as to say you would give me the little picture with the black hat, I wish you would unfrill it, and give it to Mr. Dutens. I have a great regard for him. He took a deal of pains and trouble for me, and I could not do him a greater favour than to give him my picture. Do, my dear friend, do me that pleasure, and if there is anything from Naples, command me.

"We have many English at Naples, as Lady's Malmsbury, Malden, Plymouth, Carneigee, Wright, etc. They are very kind and attentive to me. They all make it a point to be remarkably civil to me. You will be happy at this, as you know what prudes our Ladys are. Tell Hayley I am always reading his

[1] Lady Sutherland, then Ambassadress at Paris.

Triumphs of Temper. It was *that* that made me Lady H., for God knows I had for five years enough to try my temper, and I am afraid, if it had not been for the good example Serena tought me, my girdle would have burst,[1] and if it had, I had been undone, for Sir William more minds temper than beauty. He therefore wishes Mr. Hayley would come, that he may thank him for his sweet-tempered wife. I swear to you I have never once been out of temper since the 6th of last September.

"God bless you. Yours,

"E. HAMILTON."

This letter seems to contain conclusive proof that the artist and his model had been acquainted before the year 1782, when their first introduction is represented as having taken place under the auspices of Greville. There is something rather pathetic in Emma's belief, shared by most of her class, that her belated marriage had restored her to honour and innocence, and in her gratitude to Sir William for having, in the popular phrase, "made an honest woman of her." Romney's reply to

[1] Serena, the heroine of Hayley's poem, wore a magic girdle, which gave a warning pressure when she was in danger of losing her temper.

the lady's outpourings is couched in a more formal and conventional style, being evidently intended for the eye of Sir William Hamilton.

"My dear Lady,"—he writes,—"What must you think of my neglect in answering your kind letter. Do not accuse me of ingratitude. I wish I could express myself as I felt at the perusal of it, to find your happiness so compleat. May God grant it may remain so to the end of your days. You may be assured that I have the same anxiety that Sir William and yourself should continue to think well of me, and the same desire to do everything in my power that may merit your esteem. I have waited till I could give you some account of the picture of Cassandra, and others of the pictures you were so kind as to sit to me for. The Cassandra is at last gone to the Shakespeare Gallery—it suits. The King and the Royal Family saw it. I have never heard from the Prince of Wales till a few days ago Mr. West called, and said the Prince desired him to look at the picture for His Royal Highness. They are near finished. The lively one I have made to suit Calipso (*sic*). I am anxious to know what you wish me to do with the picture with a Bonnet. Mr. Crawford has expressed a great desire of possess-

EMMA

ing it in preference to the other. I sent, as your ladyship required, the picture in black to M. *du Ton* [Dutens] . . ."[1]

Directly after the Hamiltons' departure for Italy, Romney had hastened down to his holiday refuge at Eartham. In his anxiety to make as many studies as time would permit from his favourite model he had overtaxed his strength, and it was some weeks before he recovered from the strain. His brush lay idle during his stay at Eartham, and on his return to London he wrote a somewhat melancholy letter to his host, in which, after thanking him for the kindness that contributed to the restoration of his "shattered and feeble frame," he continues, "I hope in a few days to be able to bring my mind into the old trammels of drudgery; though it appears horrible to me to take up the trifling part of my profession."

[1] The Rev. — Dutens had been one of the witnesses of the Hamilton marriage.

CHAPTER XI

FRIENDSHIP WITH WILLIAM COWPER

Madame de Genlis and Pamela — Death of Sir Joshua Reynolds—Romney and Cowper at Eartham—Charlotte Smith—Portrait of Cowper—A literary party—Cowper's Sonnet to Romney—Letter from Cowper to Romney—Picture of "Milton dictating to his Daughters."

IN the winter of 1791–2 Madame de Genlis and the beautiful Pamela—afterwards Lady Edward Fitzgerald—paid a visit to England. Hayley was anxious to entertain them at Eartham, and invited Romney to meet them there; but this plan fell through, and it was not until January, when the ladies were established in London for a time, that the artist found an opportunity of returning the civilities that they had shown him in Paris. In one of his letters he mentions having attended them repeatedly to the play-house, and adds, "I am painting two pictures of Pamela, and I think they will both be beautiful. As they

MRS. YATES

By kind permission of Lord Llangattock

are two different views of her face, one will of course be better than the other, and I shall give Madame de Genlis her choice of them." Owing to the pressure of other work, these portraits were never finished, but a clever sketch of Madame de Genlis' plain features was sufficiently advanced to be presented to Hayley, who had it engraved for his *Life of Romney*. One of the Pamela studies also passed into Hayley's possession, while the other was bought by Lord Clancarty many years later. In the course of the winter the Bard of Eartham came to town to meet his little son Tom,[1] who was on his way home from a visit to Mrs. Hayley at Derby. Romney delighted the father's heart by painting a fanciful portrait of the boy in the character of Puck, flying on a cloud, and crowned with a chaplet of the flowers that he had been commissioned by Oberon to find.

In February, 1792, the whole art-world was thrown into mourning by the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds, an event which made a profound impression upon the mind of his rival. In the comparison—in some points not inapt

[1] Thomas Alphonso, the illegitimate son of Hayley. The boy was adopted by Mrs. Hayley, and brought up as her own child.

—which Hayley draws between Romney and Reynolds, he observes that Nature had endowed the former with a larger share of imagination, a more delicate sensibility, and a keener passion for study, while upon the latter she had bestowed that mild and serene wisdom which enables a man to exert whatever talents he possesses with the fullest and happiest effects. She had given him also the securest panoply against the arrows of worldly contention in the polished good-humour which conciliates universal esteem. Johnson described Reynolds as the most invulnerable man he had ever known, but of Romney it might have been said, as Garrick said of Cumberland, that he was a man with only one skin.

In the previous year Hayley had been commissioned by Boydell and Nicoll to write a *Life of Milton,* which, it was proposed, should be elaborately illustrated. Hearing, however, that Cowper was engaged upon a new edition of Milton's works, to be illustrated by Fuseli, Hayley wrote to his brother-bard, for whose genius he entertained an ardent admiration, disclaiming all intention of entering into rivalry with his work. The result of this friendly correspondence was an invitation to Weston, where Hayley spent a part of May. Thence

he wrote an account of his experiences to Romney, who had already planned a series of pictures from *Paradise Lost*, and for that reason took a keen interest in Cowper's Miltonic work. Hayley held out the hope that the poet and the painter who, in his own words, "were peculiarly formed to relish the different but congenial talents that rendered each an object of affectionate admiration," might meet at Eartham in the course of the autumn. In his reply, Romney observes, "You introduced my mind to a new acquaintance; and I feel from your manner of introduction much interested for that ideal friend, as much as if I had spent much time in his company. Indeed, I cannot help being anxious about a character of so extraordinary a kind."

The promised meeting duly took place. About the beginning of August Cowper and his aged companion, Mrs. Unwin, arrived at Eartham, where among their fellow-guests were Charlotte Smith,[1] the novelist, and Romney. "In a few days after his [Romney's]

[1] Charlotte Smith (1749–1800) was the daughter of a Sussex gentleman named Farmer. Her marriage to Benjamin Smith, a West India merchant, was not happy, and she separated from her husband shortly after the appearance of her volume of Sonnets (1784), which was dedicated to Hayley. She settled at Midhurst, Sussex,

arrival," relates Hayley, "he agreed with me entirely in thinking that the genius, the benevolence, and the misfortunes of Cowper gave such a peculiar sweetness and sanctity to his character as rendered his society delightful in the highest degree." Charlotte Smith, who had long desired to meet the poet, exerted her talents most agréeably, we are told, to excite his wonder and conciliate his esteem. "Romney," continues Hayley, "who had long admired her genius and pitied her troubles, was delighted to find her still capable of such mental activity under such a load of misfortune, and testified his esteem for her writings by executing a portrait of the authoress in coloured crayons."

During the same visit Romney began a portrait of Cowper, which, like the sketch of Mrs. Smith, was executed in pastel, to him an unfamiliar medium. He produced a resemblance so remarkable, however, that spectators who contemplated the portrait with the original by its side, thought it hardly possible

with her twelve children, whom she educated and put out into the world, besides contributing to the support of her husband. In 1788 she published her first novel *Ethelinde; or, The Orphan of the Castle*, but *The Old Manor House* was considered the best of her prose works.

for any likeness to be more striking or more exact. "Romney wished," writes Hayley, "to express what he often saw in studying the features of Cowper, 'The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,' and I think he expressed it without overstepping the modesty of truth and nature, but some persons, and ladies in particular, more conversant with the colloquial than the poetic countenance of Cowper, have supposed Romney's portrait of him to border on extravagance. It is possible that Romney may have superadded a little of his own wildness and fire to the native enthusiasm of the poet; yet after scrutinising it for many years with eyes as impartial as friendship may pretend to, I regard the portrait in question as one of the most masterly and most faithful representations I ever beheld."

Romney gives a minute and interesting account of this memorable visit to Eartham in a letter to his son, written shortly after his return to London. "I was a month at Mr. Hayley's," he relates, "where I met Mr. Cowper and Mrs. Smith; yet in spite of such good company, and bathing, my health continued very poorly. Mr. Cowper is a most excellent man; he has translated Milton's Latin poems, and I suppose very well.

Hayley is writing the Life of Milton, so you may suppose that we were deep in that poet; everything belonging to him was collected together, and some part of his works read every day. Mrs. Smith is writing a novel, which, as far as it is advanced, is, I think, very good. She began it while I was there, and wrote a chapter every day, which was read at night without requiring any correction. I think her a woman of astonishing powers. She has two daughters grown to womanhood, a son in the East Indies, and another at Winchester School, and she supports them almost wholly by her writings. She and the two poets were employed every morning from eight till twelve in writing, when they had a luncheon and walked an hour; they then wrote again till they dressed for dinner. After dinner Hayley and Cowper were employed in translating an Italian play on the subject of Satan;[1] about twenty lines was the number every day. After that they walked or played at coits; then tea, and after that they read till supper. This was their general plan of each day. I mention this as an example of the most rational employment of time, and the greatest industry."

[1] Andreini's *Adam*.

THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER

From the picture in the National Gallery

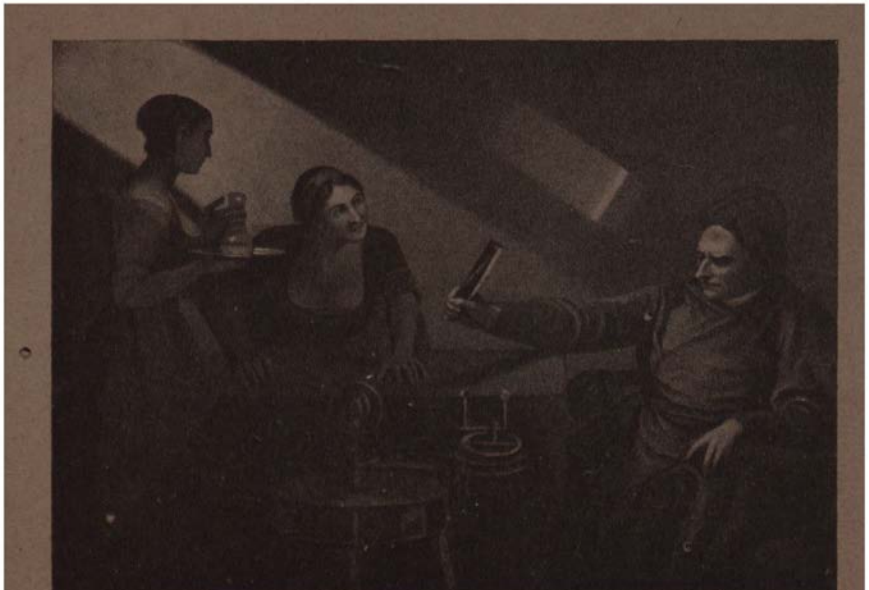
Cowper wrote to Lady Hesketh from Eartham to tell her that Romney had painted him "in his best hand," and adds, "Hayley, whose love for me seems to be truly that of a brother, has given me his picture drawn by Romney about ten years ago—a most admirable likeness." The poet desired to show his appreciation of the painter in sonnet form, but owing to his failing powers the poem was a long time on the stocks, and only with difficulty evolved. In a letter to Hayley, dated October 13th, 1792, he wrote: "The name of a man whom I esteem as I do Romney, ought not to be unmusical in my ears, but his name will be so till I have paid him a debt justly due to him by doing such poetical honours to it as I intend. Heaven knows when that intention will be executed, for the Muse is still as obstinate and coy as ever." When at last the sonnet was finished it was, if not the most favourable specimen of the poet's powers, at least a welcome improvement on the verse-tributes which Hayley, Cumberland, and Miss Seward had showered on the painter. Familiar as the poem will be to many readers, it is appended here for the benefit of those moderns to whom the Bard of Weston is chiefly known as the creator of John Gilpin.

"Romney! expert infallibly to trace
On chart or canvas not the form alone
And semblance, but however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face,
With strokes that time ought never to erase.
Thou hast so pencill'd mine that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.
But this I mark, that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear:
Well, I am satisfied I should be so,
Since on maturer thought the cause is clear;
For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see,
While I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?"

Cowper was urgent that Romney and Hayley should together pay a return visit to Weston. The plan, which was never carried out, is mentioned in a letter from the poet to the painter (dated November 28th) in grateful acknowledgment of Hayley's portrait.

"Since I left Weston," writes Cowper, "nothing has occurred that has given me so much pleasure as the arrival of your fine picture of our most amiable friend Hayley; and your kindness in sending me what the box contains besides, gratifies me in the highest degree, convincing me that I am not forgotten by one whom I shall always remember with affection. My young cousin[1] has told me by letter how

[1] The Rev. John John on, nicknamed "Johnny of Norfolk" by Cowper.



NEWTON DISPLAYING THE PRISM

kindly you behaved to him when he called on you. For this I thank you likewise, for I love him, and have reason to do so. It was a very sensible mortification to me that I could not have the pleasure of seeing you at your own house in my way through London; but the danger of offending others whom I should have been obliged to pass unvisited deterred me. The happy day I hope will come when you will make me amends for what I lost by that severe necessity by giving us your company at Weston. Happy indeed should I be to see you here, and the hope of it, which you give me courage to entertain, is too pleasant to be lightly parted with. Hayley will be called to London some time in the coming year, and a chaise will bring you easily in seven hours. A little relaxation will be good for you, and your enjoying it here will be equally good for me. I have been a poor creature ever since I saw you; dispirited to the greatest degree, and incapable of all mental exertion—a state from which I do not expect to recover till the buds shall peep, and less sullen skies revive me.

"Adieu, God bless you!

"Believe me affectionately yours,

"Wm. Cowper."

One result of the association with two poets who were both at work upon Miltonic subjects was the idea of the picture of "Milton dictating to his Daughters," which Romney painted in the following year, a pleasant if not very impressive composition. This was the first of a series of pictures, partly portrait and partly imaginative, that the artist had in contemplation; but his "Newton displaying the Prism," painted in 1794, was the second and last subject of this series that he actually completed.

CHAPTER XII

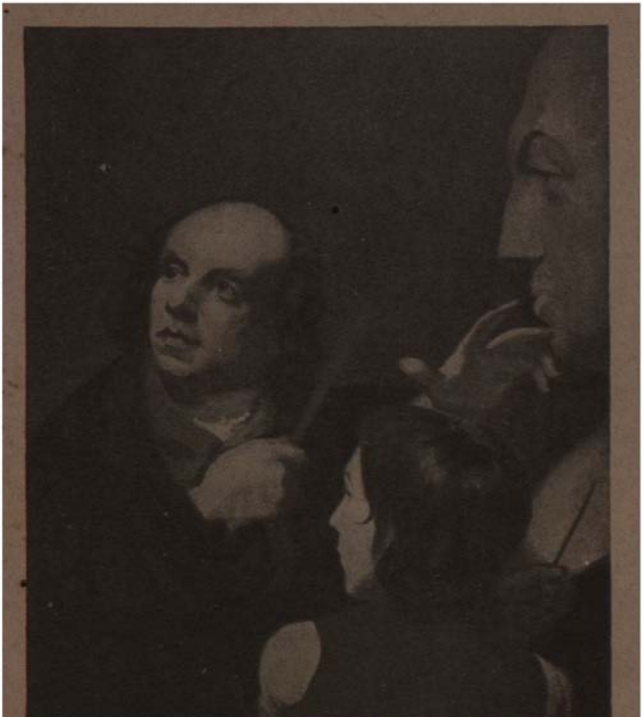
NEW PROJECTS

Building scheme—Purchase of casts—Declining health—Pine Apple Place—An act of philanthropy—The drudgery of portrait-painting—Pictorial suggestions—Proposed series from *Paradise Lost*—Visit to the Isle of Wight—Picture of "Newton displaying the Prism."

IN 1792 we have the first intimation of a new undertaking which caused Romney a good deal of worry and expense in the last years of his active career, but which also afforded him occupation and amusement during the gradual decline of his faculties. Having become infected with Hayley's passion for bricks and mortar, he conceived the idea of building a house with a studio and gallery, a few miles out of London, and forming a domestic academy where, as his own powers failed, he might still do good service to the art he loved, by acting as a foster-father to young painters. Partly for the benefit of his pupils, and partly for the sake of his own studies,

he had commissioned Flaxman, who was then in Rome, to buy him a hundred pounds' worth of the best casts that could be obtained for the money. In September, 1792, the sculptor wrote to say that he had sent off ten large cases of casts, which had taken him several months to collect. These included the group of the Laocöon, the Apollo Belvedere, the Castor and Pollux, the Cupid and Psyche, in fact "the cream of all the finest things in Rome."

In January, 1793, Romney wrote to his friend at Eartham: "My plaster figures are arrived, and I am charmed with them, both for the choice and the perfection of the casts. I shall have one of the finest museums in London for antique sculpture." The painter took a keen pleasure in studying his new treasures, and loved to exhibit them to his friends at evening parties, when he suspended a powerful light over the Laocöon in order to give enhanced grandeur to the group. Like his father, he possessed a talent for mechanical invention, and had contrived a new scheme for lighting theatres from above, by which he claimed the actors would be seen to greater advantage, and the eyes of the spectators be less offended by the glare; but we do not hear that he



FLAXMAN MODELLING THE BUST OF HAYLEY

From the picture in the National Portrait Gallery

persuaded any theatrical manager to experiment with the contrivance.

Hayley, for his own purposes, it is averred, encouraged his friend's building scheme, and recommended a *protégé* of his own as architect, but it was not until two or three years later that any practical steps were taken to put the project, which gradually increased in magnitude, into execution. It is probable that the seeds of the mental malady which brought Romney's career to so melancholy a conclusion were already sown, and that the grandiose nature of his ideas during these last few years was one of the symptoms of his disease. His fine physical constitution showed signs of giving way under the strain of overwork during the season of 1793, when he was persuaded to undertake more commissions than he could possibly carry out. In a letter to his brother, written about this time, he says: "My health is not at all constant, my nerves give way, and I have no time to go in quest of pleasure to prevent a decline of health. My hands are full, and I shall be forced to refuse new faces at last in order to be enabled to finish the number I have in an unfinished state. I shall regret the necessity of forbearing to take new faces. There is a

delight in the novelty greater than in the profit gained by sending them home finished."

In the hope of improving his health, and gaining a little time for work on imaginative pictures, Romney hired a room in a house called Pine Apple Place, on the Kilburn Road, and walked thither every morning for breakfast and a couple of hours' work. "I have eight children to wait upon me," he wrote to Hayley, "and fine ones too. I begin to feel the necessity for having these innocent little spirits about me; they give more delight to the mind than I can describe, and soften the path down declining life." These eight attendants were the children of the couple from whom he rented his room, and who seem to have gained an ascendency over his mind which was not to the advantage of his pocket. On one occasion —Hayley relates the anecdote in proof of his friend's kindness and generosity—Romney was surprised to find some of his little favourites in tears. On questioning them, he learnt that their father was in danger of losing his home unless he could at once raise a sum of two hundred pounds. "The kind heart of Romney," we are told, "felt itself commissioned by Heaven to be the protector of meritorious indigence. He instantly relieved his honest

humble host from the most bitter embarrassment, and found his future breakfasts on that spot inexpressibly delicious, being sweetened by the cordial benedictions of a very interesting family whom he had rescued from distress." A curious commentary upon this act of generosity may be found in Romney's account-books for this period. It has been stated that throughout his prosperous years he made a handsome allowance to his family, but it appears that in the year 1792 he only paid £84 by draft to his wife and son; in 1793, £110; and in 1794, £120.

In the course of this season Romney painted the Margrave and the Margravine of Anspach (the latter he had already painted twice as Lady Craven), Mrs. Horsley and her children, Mr. Henry Dundas for the University of Dublin, and a picture of the Indian Woman in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (act ii. scene 3), which was bought by Mr. Beckford, of Fonthill, for three hundred guineas. On August 12th he wrote to Hayley: "I long to hasten down to you and tell you all my feelings and complaints, and to strip myself of drudgery in the shabby part of my art, for a while at least, and I should be happy if I could do without taking it up again." This expression of contempt

for the practice of portrait-painting is curiously at variance with the writer's oft-declared delight in portraying "new faces," but Romney, like all impressionable natures, seems to have taken the colour of his environment. When at Eartham he was the poetical genius, yearning for the opportunity of devoting himself to great original works; while in London he was the fashionable portrait-painter delighted to welcome rank and beauty to his studio.

After recovering in some measure from the fatigues of the London season in the fine air of Eartham, and sketching out a number of ambitious designs for future pictures, Romney went back to town with his usual reluctance—like a spoiled child returning to school. In a letter written a few days after his arrival in Cavendish Square, he gives a vivid pen-picture of his impression on approaching London. "I observed," he says, "a sharpness of countenance in the people I met, with passions so strongly marked, I suppose none could mistake. Deep design, disappointed ambition, envy, hatred, melancholy disease, poverty. These appearances one is for ever meeting in the skirts of London; not like the Sussex peasants, with faces round with health, and expressions of contentment everywhere. The

LADY STORMONT
(AFTERWARDS LADY MANSFIELD)

square and parti-coloured appearance of the buildings, the variety of noises and bustle had a very unpleasant effect on my senses, and now I am arrived, how hard I have found it to reconcile my mind, so relaxed with the beautiful scenery of Eartham, to the old habits of mechanical drudgery."

From time to time Hayley sent promising pictorial suggestions to his artist-friend, and in a letter of thanks for one of these Romney observes: "I must say you are more happy in forming in your mind subjects suitable for pictures, than all the men of learning and taste I ever met with put together. If you and Cowper would join in a work with prints from designs by Flaxman and your humble servant—but more of this when I see you. . . . I have not been negligent in my ideas of pictures. I have been arranging some of the subjects in the Seven Ages, and think I shall be able to make some of them soon." This new undertaking was a series of twelve large pictures in which the whole life of man—not merely Shakespeare's Seven Ages—was to be delineated. But the work was never advanced beyond a few preliminary sketches.

In the early days of 1794 Romney was much affected by the death of his old acquaintance,

Edward Gibbon, and writing to Hayley shortly afterwards, he observes: "Poor Gibbon! His last words were *Mon Dieu, Bon Dieu.* They have affected me so much I shall turn my thoughts more to Christianity than I have done. The approach of death convinced him that there is something more than he believed." Apropos of this utterance we are told that Romney felt a most sincere and cordial reverence for the Gospel, and intended, during his later years, to devote himself entirely to the painting of religious pictures. His restless mind was now occupied with the long-cherished idea of painting a grand series of pictures from *Paradise Lost*, which he describes in a letter written in February of this year. "I have formed," he says, "a plan of painting the Visions of Adam with the Angel, to bring in the Flood and the opening of the Ark, which would make six large pictures. Indeed, to tell the truth, I have made designs of all the pictures, and very good subjects they are. My plan, if I should live and retain my senses and sight, is to paint six other subjects from Milton; three where Satan is the hero, and three of Adam and Eve. I have ideas of all, and I may say sketches; but alas! I cannot begin anything for one year or two,

and if my name was mentioned, I should have nothing but abuse, and that I cannot bear." Romney is said to have been perfectly conscious of the excessive awe in which he held the world, and sometimes would jest with great humour on his own extravagant timidity.

A part of the summer holiday this year was spent in the Isle of Wight, whither Romney was accompanied by his son. A visit to Holland, for the purpose of buying pictures, was also in contemplation, but was abandoned in favour of the customary sojourn at Eartham. Hayley, finding his friend more than usually dejected, persuaded him to undertake a little tour in Hampshire, and together they visited Portsmouth and spent a few hours at Wickham, the home of the critic Warton, who was a warm admirer of Romney's cartoons from scenes in Greek tragedy. Refreshed by this change the artist went back to town in better health and spirits. In November Flaxman's return from Italy, after an absence of seven years, gave the keenest pleasure to Romney, who welcomed him with almost parental affection, and this pleasure was increased by the sculptor's proposal to take young Tom Hayley into his house as a pupil-apprentice.

Before closing the record of this year it should be noted that, in the course of the season, Romney painted the portraits of several persons of distinction, among others of the Duke of Portland, Lord Euston, Abraham Newland, for the Bank of England, and (from a cast) Alderman Beckford, for Mr. Beckford, of Fonthill. During the winter he finished the picture already alluded to, of "Newton displaying the Prism," which was a companion work to "Milton dictating to his Daughters." The philosopher is represented in the act of holding a prism in a ray of sunlight. Of the two female attendants who complete the group, one is bringing in a bottle of water on a tray, and takes no notice of the phenomenon, while the other, modelled upon Lady Hamilton, is laughing at the effect of the prismatic colours on the wall. Though an attractive composition on the whole, it is more successful as a domestic interior than as the representation of a philosopher exhibiting a grand scientific discovery.

CHAPTER XIII

BRICKS AND MORTAR

Tom Hayley—Picture of Lady Egremont and children—"The Four Friends"—A Milton Gallery—Holly Bush Hill—A costly whim—A trip to Cambridge—Increasing depression—A journey North—Illness of Tom Hayley—Move to Hampstead—Last visit to Eartham—Return to Kendal.

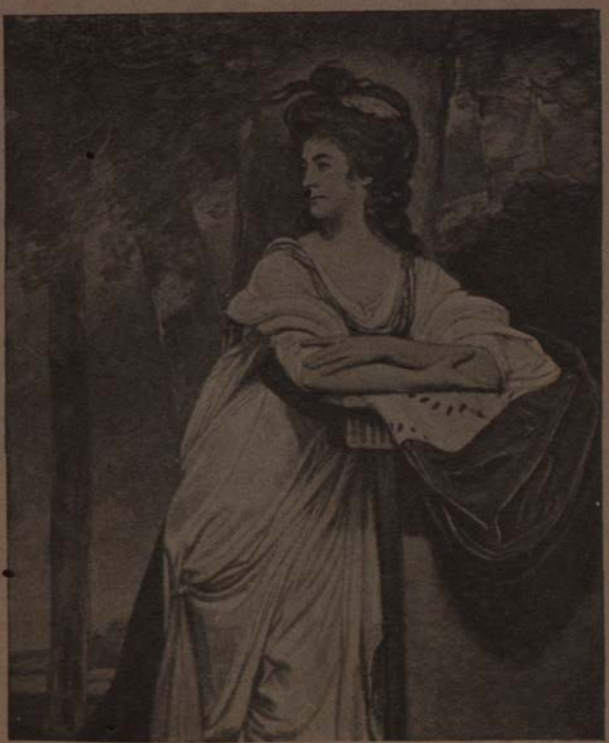
IN the early part of 1795 Romney began a large and ambitious picture—far too ambitious for his failing powers—in illustration of the passage in *Paradise Regained* descriptive of the Temptation in the Wilderness—

> "Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
> Environed thee; some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd,
> Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
> Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace."

Needless to say the picture was never finished, though the head of the Saviour—a rather conventional study—was sufficiently advanced to be engraved for Hayley's Life of the painter.

We obtain one or two glimpses of Romney at this period from the letters of his boy-friend, Tom Hayley, who was now installed in Flaxman's house as his apprentice. On March 29th young Hayley (then in his fifteenth year) wrote to his father: "The Flaxmans I like more and more. He is such a man he cannot be too much praised. Mrs. Flaxman is very good to me; so is the immortal painter. He desires that I will chuse any of his casts to model from that I please. He intends to take lodgings at Hampstead to recruit his health. He has begun the head of our Saviour in the Wilderness. It is very much the thing, I think. I am quite in his confidence."

The elder Hayley boasts with fatherly pride that Romney thought so much of the boy's judgment that he frequently consulted him, more especially on subjects connected with his art. The budding sculptor, who considered glory infinitely preferable to gold, continually exhorted his elderly friend to renounce portrait-painting altogether, and devote his whole time to historical compositions. Perhaps it was in consequence of the advice of his youthful mentor that Romney wrote to Hayley in the course of the summer: "I am going to decline business, wind up my affairs, and then build



THE COUNTESS OF WESTMORLAND

me a house, which I hope will inspire me with more vigour, and I pray God I may recover my spirits to go on anew. I have still the same passion for art, and begin to feel at times a regeneration in my mind that approaches to something more refined. . . . I am still unsettled where and when I shall fix my first stone, and make my gravel walks, and plant my cedars; but to build my house and plant my cedars I am determined. God light up the imagination of lawyers!"

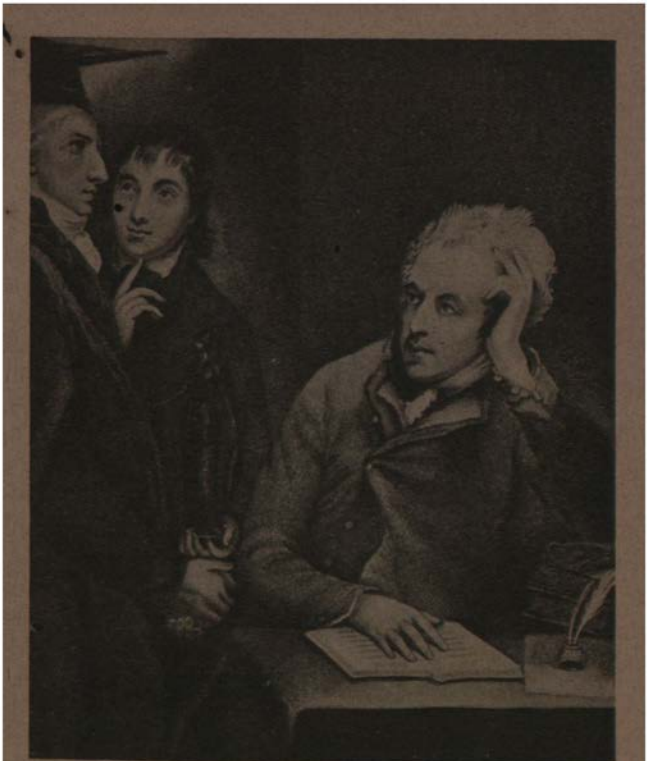
For some time past Lord Egremont, one of the most liberal art patrons of his day, had desired that Romney should accept a commission for a large family piece, to be added to the famous collection at Petworth; and during the visit to Eartham this autumn the picture was begun. Romney was allowed to work in his favourite garden studio, Lady Egremont and her children, who were represented as Titania and her attendant fairies shooting at bats, coming over the hills from Petworth every morning to sit to him. Among the other portraits painted this year were those of the Duke of Richmond, Lord Westmorland, Mrs. Bosanquet and five children, Isaac Reed the Shakespearean editor, and a whole-length of Warren Hastings, besides a remark-

able "conversation piece" representing Flaxman modelling the bust of Hayley, with Tom Hayley in attendance, and the painter himself looking on from behind. John Romney, with filial exaggeration, places this picture on a level with Raphael's "Frederic Carondelet" and Rubens' "Four Philosophers."

Another interesting work, of the same character as the above, called "The Four Friends," was painted early in 1796. This represents Hayley in the act of reading aloud from Tully's *Essay on Friendship* to his son and young Meyer,[1] while the figure of Romney appears as usual in the background.[2] The artist little imagined that this was the last important work he would live to finish. Only a short time before he had written to his son: "I have made my grand designs; I have formed a system of original subjects, moral and my own—and, I think, one of the grandest that has ever been thought of—but nobody knows it. Hence it is my view to wrap myself in retirement and pursue these plans, as I begin to feel I cannot bear trouble of any kind."

[1] Son of Jeremiah Meyer, the miniature painter.

[2] This was engraved for the frontispiece of the second volume of Hayley's *Memoirs*, but with the figure of Romney left out.



THE FOUR FRIENDS

(WILLIAM HAYLEY, MEYER AND THOMAS HAYLEY.
THE FIGURE OF ROMNEY WAS ORIGINALLY IN
THE BACKGROUND)

It is evident that Romney, now on the verge of his grand climateric, realised that the time had come when, if ever he were to carry out his ambitious dreams, he must lay aside the agreeable practice of painting "new faces" and devote his remaining years to the pursuit of that phantom—fame as a great historical painter—which had beckoned to him from the time of his early youth. With apparently unshaken self-confidence he had mapped out the tremendous scheme of founding a Milton Gallery, which, though the contents were all to be from the brush of one man, should rival, if not eclipse, the splendour of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery.

When John Romney visited his father in the summer of 1796, he found him employed in making plans for fantastic buildings, and on the point of signing a contract for the purchase of four acres of land in the Edgware Road, whereon he proposed to erect a mansion worthy of his schemes. But away from the influence of Hayley, Romney was amenable to reason, and when his son represented to him the advantage of buying a ready-built house, and recommended to his notice a villa at Hampstead, called Holly Bush Hill, to which he might easily add a studio and gallery, he readily

agreed to break off the negotiations for the site in the Edgware Road. The villa at Hampstead was obtained for a moderate price—seven hundred pounds—and it is stated that for about five hundred more such additions might have been made as would have answered all purposes. The house was roomy and convenient, with a large garden and good stables; but Romney was determined on dabbling in bricks and mortar at any cost. He pulled down the stables, and on their site erected a studio and picture-gallery, with a few habitable rooms above, and to this he joined half the garden, in which he built a wooden arcade to serve as a riding-house, probably in imitation of the one at Eartham. Having let the original house at a good rent, he moved into his new dwelling (towards the end of 1798) before the walls were dry, and, for want of space, crammed his unsold pictures into the arcade, where, being exposed to the air, they were irretrievably damaged in the course of the winter. The cost of this building whim amounted to nearly three thousand pounds, exclusive of incidental charges.

Meanwhile Hayley, having seriously embarrassed his fortune by his "improvements" at Eartham, was building a small villa at

Felpham, a few miles away, foreseeing that he would shortly be obliged to let his own place and reduce his establishment. Before paying his usual visit to Sussex this year, Romney made a trip to Cambridge with his friend Carwardine,[1] but little has been recorded of his experience on the journey save that he dined with Dr. Craven, Master of St. John's, and, with his usual impulsive enthusiasm, declared that Holbein's portrait of Bishop Fisher, founder of the College, was one of the finest portraits ever painted.

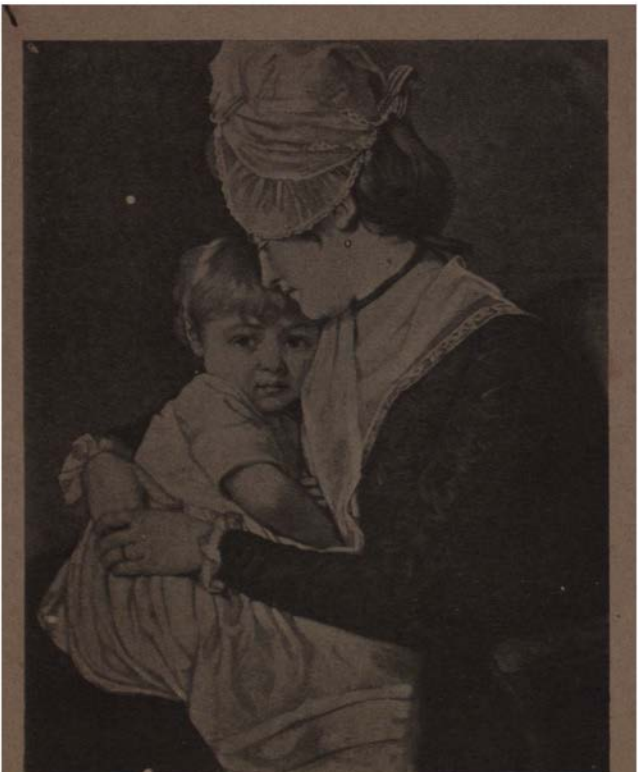
The year 1796 drew to a close in comparative cheerfulness, but with the beginning of 1797 the clouds of languor and depression settled down once more, and the record of Romney's last few years affords but melancholy reading. He was saddened by the declining health of his favourite, Tom Hayley, who was suffering from a lingering and, as it proved, fatal illness. We hear of little work being done this year, whether in town or country, and the artist seems to have found his chief occupation in superintending the building operations at Hampstead. During his stay in

[1] The Rev. Thomas Carwardine, of Colne Priory. He was a good amateur artist and an old friend and patron of Romney's.

Sussex we are told that it was a task of some anxious care to preserve in Romney's mind a tolerable degree of serenity, since he was now subject to thick-coming fancies. He began a picture of the two Hayleys as Tobias and Tobit, but the effort of painting proved too much for his declining strength.

The spring of 1798 saw a slight temporary improvement in Romney's health. He rode or walked out to Hampstead every day, and worked with more vigour, though only at portraits. Writing to condole with Hayley on his son's alarming illness, he adds: "I hope to see you and him next winter upon the hill at Hampstead, where I hope to have my mansion thoroughly dried and fit for your reception and my gratification, as it is now in a very advanced state, and much to my liking. It will equal my most ardent expectation in every respect for beauty and convenience." Hayley, who came to town a few weeks later, states that his friend was then complaining of increasing weakness, both of body and mind, and moralises with his usual triteness upon the pitiable condition of a man of enterprising spirit who finds that his faculties are beginning to desert him.

For the first time in thirty years the painter



MRS. CARWARDINE AND CHILD

made an expedition to the North this summer, accompanied by his son; but his native air failed to revive him, and when he arrived at Eartham he was in a state of mental discomfort, which the sight of Tom Hayley's sufferings only served to aggravate. Impatient to witness the completion of his building operations, he went back to town earlier than usual, and by the end of the year was settled in his new abode. The house in Cavendish Square was sold to Martin Archer Shee, to whom Romney sat for his portrait by way of recommending him to his own former patrons. Thus he may be said to have burnt his boats. He had finally renounced his portrait-painting practice, had handed over his "connection" to another, and, with a fine new studio and gallery to his hand, there was at last nothing to prevent him from carrying out that grandiose project of a Milton Gallery—nothing, alas! save the decay of powers that in their prime had been used for the work that was easiest and paid the best.

In the course of the winter Hayley and his invalid son spent a few weeks in town, when they found Romney lonely and dejected in the midst of his unfamiliar leisure and luxury. The

poet recommended him to try and occupy himself with his pencil again, but afterwards confessed that he had been indiscreet in thus urging his friend to fresh efforts, and admitted that it would have been more prudent to lead a man, whose powers were on the wane, to study the "science of retreat." But he was not then aware that the artist was suffering from a slight paralytic stroke, which affected both his eye and hand.

In February, 1799, Romney paid his last visit to Eartham, which was about to pass into the hands of strangers. In his Diary for this month Hayley writes: "Romney preparing for departure to-morrow. I close the month in paying my last attentions to my infirm old friend; as after cherishing him on this favourite spot for twenty-three years, I must now consign him to more opulent protectors." The friends only met once again, on April 28th, but they were spared the melancholy knowledge that this was their last farewell. Romney was complaining at this time of a numbness in his hand and a swimming in his head, and a few weeks later he again went North with his son, in the hope of deriving some benefit from his native air. He seems to have intended to return to Hampstead as soon as his health

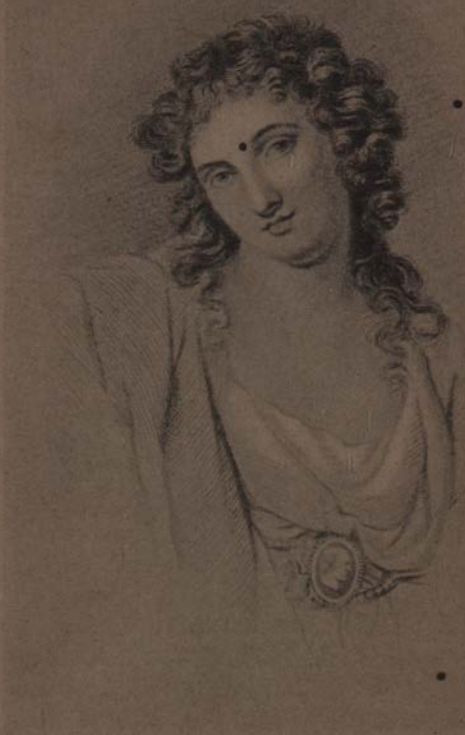
should be somewhat re-established, but he never again summed up courage to face the lonely terrors of his new domain, where the huge blank canvases stared reproachfully at him from the corners of his splendid painting-room. It was not long before he arrived at the prudent resolution of ending his days in his old home, where in his mental and physical decline he would be ministered to with tender care by his wife and son.

CHAPTER XIV

LAST DAYS

Mary Romney—Lady Hamilton's return—Arrival of James Romney—Death of the artist—Epitaph—The Rev. John Romney—Hayley's *Life of George Romney*—John Romney's *Life*—Tennyson on Romney.

BROKEN down in health and sunk in melancholy, Romney was thus delivered into the hands of his deserted Mary, who, fortunately for him, was content to take a good woman's revenge for the sufferings that he had brought upon her. Years of absence and neglect had never, we are assured, betrayed her into an act of unkindness or an expression of reproach, and now, with the same quiet self-abnegation, she set herself to smooth her husband's path to the grave. In his letters to Hayley, Romney did full justice—at last—to the virtues of his wife, and spoke of her devotion in terms of the tenderest gratitude. Though obliged to renounce oil-painting for ever, he



LADY HAMILTON
WEARING NELSON'S MINIATURE

could still amuse himself by sketching a portrait in crayons, while he found some occupation in the purchase of an estate in the neighbourhood, which was intended as an inheritance for his son.

Of Romney's last days we get only a few brief glimpses from his correspondence with his Eartham friend. In 1800 Lady Hamilton returned from Naples in triumph with Nelson in her train, but she had not forgotten the genius who had immortalised her. "She expressed to me," relates Hayley, "the most friendly solicitude concerning the health of our beloved artist, and an anxious wish concerning a portrait of herself which he had intended to present to her mother." Romney, on being informed of her desire, wrote to ask Hayley to look out the picture from among the canvases that he had left at Hampstead, and present it to her ladyship, adding: "The pleasure I should receive from a sight of the amiable Lady Hamilton would be as salutary as great; yet, I fear, except I should enjoy better health and better spirits at a better time of year, I shall never be able to see London again. I feel every day greater need of care and attention, and here I experience them in the highest degree."

In his last letter to Hayley, Romney wrote that the post had just brought him good tidings of his only surviving brother, Colonel James Romney, who was then on his way home from India. But the meeting between the two brothers, who had been parted for so many years, came too late. When the Colonel arrived the invalid failed to recognise him, but on being asked if he did not remember the stranger, he gazed eagerly into his brother's face, then burst into an agony of tears, and immediately relapsed into unconsciousness. He suffered no more pain, but lingered on in a state of helpless weakness until released by death on November 15th, 1802. In view of the simple and retired habits of his whole life it was thought more in accord with what would have been his own wishes, that his career should be commemorated by a modest monument in Dalton Church, where he was buried with his forefathers, than by a public funeral and an ostentatious epitaph. Unfortunately, when the monument was taken to Dalton, Lord George Cavendish, the lay rector, refused to allow it to be set up. It was, therefore, brought back to Kendal, and placed in the church there, as a cenotaph, with the following inscription :—

"To the Memory of George Romney, Esquire, the celebrated painter, who died at Kendal the 15th of November, 1802, and was interred at Dalton, the place of his birth. So long as genius and talent shall be respected, his name will live."

Before proceeding to deal with the character and attainments of Romney as man and artist it is necessary to gather up the loose threads of his story, and briefly to indicate how he fared at the hands of his various chroniclers. With regard to the disposition of his property, the expensive hobby-house at Hampstead was sold at a heavy loss, but the Whitestock estate, near Kendal, was retained by the artist's son, who built upon it a mansion known as Whitestock Hall. The Rev. John Romney had taken holy orders in 1782, and was elected a Fellow of his college in 1785. He lived chiefly at Cambridge, holding various college offices, down to the time of his father's death. In 1804 he was presented to the cures of Thurgarton and Cockley Cley, in Norfolk, and in 1806 he married Jane Kennel, a native of Kendal. He seems to have spent the last part of his life at Whitestock, where he died in 1832, leaving three daughters and two sons. His last surviving daughter, Elizabeth, died in 1893, when her collection of Romney drawings and manuscripts was sold at Christie's.

Hayley's intention of writing his friend's Life had early been divulged, and Cumberland, in his account of Romney's last days, observes: "This admirable artist sank into a distant and inglorious grave, fortunate alone in this, that his fame is consigned to the protection of Mr. Hayley, from whom the world expects his history. There, if he says no more of him than that he was at least as good a painter as Cowper was a poet, he will say enough; and if his readers see the parallel in the light that I do, they will not think that he shall have said too much."

Hayley lost no time in beginning his biography, but owing to the dilatoriness of the engraver, Caroline Watson, the book did not appear until 1809, when it met with no very favourable reception. It is in truth a poor piece of work, bombastic in style and confused in construction. The only periods of the artist's life that are described in detail are those which he spent at Eartham, while as regards his productions, we hear of little except his historical designs, finished or unfinished, his portraits, unless they happened to represent friends of the writer, being passed over with silent contempt. The chief value of the book, apart from Romney's correspondence, lies in

the numerous and admirable engravings from his works.

In 1820 John Romney began to prepare a Life of his father, which was intended to correct and supersede Hayley's unsatisfactory work. Writing to Flaxman for permission to publish some extracts from the sculptor's letters, he was gratified by the following reply:—

"I always remember Mr. Romney's notice of my boyish years and productions with gratitude; his original and striking conversation; his masterly, grand and feeling compositions are continually before me, and I still feel the benefits of his acquaintance and recommendations. I am not surprised at your desire to correct misstatements in the published life of a father so eminent in his art, adorned besides with qualities equally rare and valuable. I am sure his late biographer intended to honour his memory with his best exertions, but we must not forget the feebleness of human judgment; we may think we paid a splendid tribute where glitter supplies the place of reality, and false sentiment usurps the place of real principle."

John Romney's biography of his father, published in 1830, if not a work of any distinguished literary merit, is at least a manly straightforward narrative, slightly coloured by

filial partiality, but in every respect except that of illustration, a great improvement on Hayley's book. The son had inherited some portion of his father's artistic taste, and had himself desired to become a painter. Romney, in dissuading him from such a course, had assured him that in order to attain success he would be obliged to "paint all day and study all night." It should not be forgotten that in 1817 John Romney generously presented forty-seven designs and drawings by his father to the University of Cambridge, to be deposited in the Fitzwilliam Museum, and in 1823 gave eighteen cartoons to the Liverpool Royal Institution.

Romney's genius, as has been seen, was celebrated by several of the poets and poetasters of his own time, and it is worthy of remark that, nearly a hundred years after his death, the melancholy record of his last days touched the imagination of two modern bards. Tennyson's poem, *Romney's Remorse*, which is included in the Demeter volume (1889), was suggested, it will be remembered, by the following passage in a letter from Edward Fitzgerald:—

"I read Hayley's *Life of Romney* the other day—Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter; but his

LADY AND CHILD

From the picture in the National Gallery

ideal was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and, because Sir Joshua and others had said that 'marriage spoilt an artist,' almost immediately left his wife in the North, and scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad, and quite desolate, he went back to her, and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of Art, I am sure."

The poem based upon this passage, in which, at last, the neglected Mary receives her due, shows the unsteadiness of the aged hand, but here and there the note rings strong and true. The reader who has followed the course of Romney's history, may not be ungrateful for the reminder that Tennyson depicts an imaginary scene between the broken-down painter and his wife. After babbling of the days when he painted Lady Hamilton as—

> "Cassandra, Hebe, Joan,
> Or spinning at your wheel beside the vine—
> Bacchante, what you will,"

Romney breaks out into bitter self-reproach for his desertion of—

> "The truest, kindliest, noblest-hearted wife
> That ever wore a Christian marriage-ring."

To the condemnation of the mindless mob at "the world's bastard judgment day," he declares his indifference, since "Six foot deep of burial mould will dull their comments," but—

> Ay, but when the shout
> Of His descending peals from Heaven, and throbs
> Thro' earth, and all her graves, if *He* should ask
> 'Why left you wife and children? for my sake,
> According to my word?' and I replied
> 'Nay, Lord, for Art,' why that would sound so mean
> That all the dead that wait the doom of Hell
> For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,
> Wife murders,—nay, the ruthless Mussulman
> Who flings his bow-strung Harem in the sea,
> Would turn and glare at me, and point and jeer,
> And gibber at the worm, who, living, made
> The wife of wives a widow bride, and lost
> Salvation for a sketch."

The poem closes on the note of hope. "Hope," cries the distraught painter, in answer to Mary's whispered consolation.

> "O yes, I hope, or fancy that perhaps,
> Human forgiveness touches heaven, and thence—
> For you forgive me, you are sure of that—
> Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven."

CHAPTER XV

MAN AND ARTIST

Appearance—Conversation—Modesty—Studio criticism—Pupils—Methods of work—Estimates of Romney by Flaxman and Fuseli—Sale of studio remainders—Appreciation by Thomas Phillips—Decline of reputation—The Vernon Bequest—Mid-Victorian critics—Romney revival—Record prices—Characteristics of Romney's style.

ROMNEY is described by his friends as a man of good stature and robust appearance, with broad, strong features, sensitive mouth, and dark eyes that indicated great vigour and acuteness of mind. The originality of his ideas rendered him an entertaining companion, and though he had not enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education, his extreme sensibility is said to have given delicacy to his manners, more especially when he was in the society of ladies. His harangues on art, Cumberland tells us, were delivered with a sublimity of idea and a peculiarity of impres-

sive language that was entirely his own, and in which education or reading had no share. "These sallies of natural genius, clothed in natural eloquence, were perfectly original, very highly edifying, and entertaining in the extreme. They were uttered in a hurried accent, an elevated tone, and very commonly accompanied by tears, to which he was by constitution prone. A noble sentiment never failed to make his eyes overflow and his voice tremble while he applauded the speaker. He was, on these occasions, like a man possessed, and his friends became studious not to agitate him too often with a topic of that sort. He was a rapturous advocate for Nature. An inflamed meretricious style of colouring he could never endure; and the contemplation of bad painting sensibly affected his spirits and shook his nerves."

That Romney was innately modest, candid, and single-minded we have sufficient evidence. Hayley tells us that while he invariably formed the most humble estimate of his own work, he was exceedingly generous respecting that of others, giving cordial praise wherever he saw excellence. Being present one day when some intimate friends were expressing their not very flattering opinions on Sir Joshua's picture of

"Hercules strangling the Serpents," painted for the Empress of Russia, "Gentlemen," observed Romney, "I have listened to all you have said. Some observations are true, and some are nonsense; but no other man in Europe could paint such a picture." On another occasion, when he was engaged upon a whole-length of Mrs. Siddons, he was told by a pupil that the picture was greatly admired, and considered superior to the portrait of the same lady by Sir Joshua, to which he curtly replied, "The people know nothing of the matter, for it is not." When suffering from a fit of the spleen, however, he sometimes gave way to petulance, as exemplified by his exclamation, on hearing the quality of wit attributed to some person whom he greatly disliked, "Wit! What is wit? Wit is a cursed, impudent thing, and I hate it." He had the grace, we are told, to join in the laugh which he had raised against himself.

An artist of so morbidly sensitive a temperament probably did well to refrain from exhibiting in public, as also from taking any part in the politics of his profession, unpopular as such aloofness might render him among his brethren. But even in the privacy of his own studio he suffered many things of the critics,

both expert and amateur. We have seen how he turned his "family piece" to the wall when Garrick made fun of it, and it is said that he laid aside unfinished a beautiful picture of the "Initiation of a Virgin into the Mysteries of Bacchus," on account of some ribald remark from a chance visitor. Peter Romney, in one of his letters, has given a vivid description of the studio frequenters of those days, from whose ignorant but pretentious comments his distinguished brother must have suffered even more than himself.

These types, to summarise his account, included in the first place persons who, having read a few French authors on taste, and heard of Hogarth's line of beauty, condemned all pictures that were not twisted, loose and careless; and, in the second place, those who had gathered their ideas from dancing-masters and boarding-schools, and consequently only admired such works as were neat, formal, and upright. The gentry who had been to Italy, or seen some old paintings, thought none valuable that were not half obscured by smoke or dust; and these were opposed by connoisseurs whose criterion of judgment had been gained from Chinese figures or painted actresses, and who condemned all work as

NATURE

dirty that was not as bright as a tulip. Finally, there was the type of critic who was such an enthusiast for a rough, slight, bold style of painting as to censure a picture of Venus and Adonis for its delicacy and finish; and his antithesis, an ardent admirer of the finished style, who would condemn a battle-piece for being bold and rough. "You will perceive," concludes this critic of the critics, "that these false and ridiculous judgments do not proceed so much from entire ignorance, as from their knowing a little, and thence vainly imagining that they comprehend everything."

Romney, though he was over-easily influenced by his friends, and depended to some extent for inspiration upon his models, worked upon independent lines, made few experiments in form or colour, and followed Nature rather than technical theories. It is scarcely surprising that he founded no "school," though he left one or two promising pupils, notably Isaac Pocock,[1]

[1] Isaac Pocock (1782-1835) was the son of a marine painter at Bristol. In 1798 he began to study under Romney, and accompanied his master to Eartham in 1799. Between 1800 and 1815 he exhibited a number of portraits and subject pieces at the Royal Academy. In 1818 he inherited some property from an uncle, and thenceforward devoted himself to the drama. He produced a large number of musical pieces, of which

J. Lonsdale[1] of Lancaster, and Thomas Stewardson.[2]

Another pupil, the "Robinson of Windermere," whose account of the manner in which Romney spent his working-day has already been quoted, has left some interesting notes concerning his master's artistic methods.

"His cartoons in black chalk," we are told, "were all designed at night, and at one time he had an idea of painting in oil-colours by candle-light, and was at considerable expense for reflectors, but it did not answer his expectations. Amusements he had none but what related to his profession, or in the company of his particular friends. In his painting-room he seemed to have the highest enjoyment of life, and the more he painted the greater

Hit or Miss was the most popular, and also converted some of the Waverley novels into operatic dramas.

[1] J. Lonsdale (1772–1839) was appointed portrait painter to Queen Caroline and to the Duke of Sussex. He took Opie's house after that artist's death, and achieved a very extensive practice, though his style was too smooth and tame. He was one of the original founders of the Society of British Artists.

[2] Thomas Stewardson (1781–1859) was born at Kendal, and came early to study under Romney, who painted a portrait of him. He obtained good employment as a portrait painter, and many of his works were engraved. During the last thirty years of his life he was prevented by ill-health from practising his art.

flow of spirits he acquired. His pencil was uncommonly rapid, and to see him introduce the background into one of his large pictures was something like enchantment. He was very anxious concerning the preparation of his colours; the arrangement of his flesh-palette was very curious and simple, and in some of his figures it is easy to trace the different gradations of tints as they stood on his palette. . . . At this period (1785) his pictures were highly glazed, and though they have more effect, want the delicacy of his former style. St. Cecilia was the most laboured of all his pictures, and the portrait of Lord Thurlow he esteemed his best."

John Romney has supplemented these rough notes by a minute description of his father's method of sketching the designs for his pictures. "When Mr. Romney had well studied a subject," he relates, "and was perfectly master of every part of it, so that he saw it distinctly with his mind's eye, as if it had been represented in a mirror, he had a happy facility of rapidly transferring it to the canvas while the impression was still strong on his imagination. He would make a sketch of this kind in oil-colours, upon a half-length canvas, in less than an hour, in which the effect of light

and shade, the harmony of colouring, the composition of the figures, and even the drawing and expression, would be given at once, as it were by magic, in the most bold and dashing manner. . . . It is remarkable that he never made finished drawings for his pictures; he only designed the general idea and effect, and executed the minor parts when he painted the picture. He sometimes even painted directly from invention, but never with a copy placed before him."

Among Romney's younger artistic contemporaries none was more appreciative of his genius than Flaxman and Thomas Phillips, the portrait painter. The former contributed to Hayley's biography his impressions of Romney's professional characteristics, which, though few persons would now subscribe to them in their entirety, are interesting as a specimen of the art-criticism of a distinguished eighteenth-century sculptor. Flaxman, like Hayley, cherished the illusion that Romney was gifted with a peculiar genius for historical painting. "His compositions," he observes, "told their own story by a single group of figures in the foreground, while the background is made the simplest possible, rejecting all unnecessary episode, or trivial ornament. His

MRS. CROUCH

figures resembled the antique; the limbs were elegant and finely formed; his drapery was well understood, either forming the figure into a mass with one or two deep folds, or by its adhesion and transparency discovering the form of the figure, the lines of which were finely varied with the union or expansion of spiral or cascade folds, composing with or contrasting the outline or chiaroscuro."

Romney's artistic reputation stood sorely in need of champions during the years immediately following his death, and indeed throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The inequality of his workmanship has been far outmatched by the vicissitudes in his fame and in the value of his pictures. Fuseli, in his edition of Pilkington's *Dictionary of Painters* (1805), comments somewhat slightingly upon the man who divided the tributes of fashion with Reynolds and Gainsborough. "His rooms," he observes, "were thronged with Nobles, Squires, Ministers, the Elegantes, the Belles, and the Literati of the day. History, if not absolutely abandoned, was reserved for that distant moment when satiety of gain should yield to the pure desire of glory, a moment that never came." While admitting that Romney, if he had not genius enough

to lead, had too much originality to follow, and, whenever he chose, was nearer to the first than the last of his competitors, Fuseli allows to his women only *naïveté*, an artless bloom, and sometimes elegance, and declares that his men in general have more spirit than dignity, and more of pretence than reality of character.

How Romney's work had sunk in popular estimation at this time is proved by the sale of his "studio remainders" at Christie's in 1807, when the majority of the items went for a song. The portrait of Mrs. "Perdita" Robinson fetched £16, two studies of Lady Hamilton sold for £10, the portrait of Mrs. Crouch for £5 15*s.* 6*d.*, the picture of Henderson as Macbeth for £3 3*s.*, the portrait of Lady Almeria Carpenter for £1 10*s.* 6*d.*, and that of the poet Tickell for 7*s.*! Two years earlier the beautiful picture of Lady Hamilton as Circe had been bought for just over £15 by Long, the artistic surgeon, who introduced two wolves and a panther into the background. In spite of these "improvements" the Circe was sold for upwards of four thousand pounds in 1888, when the whirligig of time had brought about a Romney revival.

Almost the only exception to the neglect from

which the master suffered in the early part of the nineteenth century is to be found in a carefully written and appreciative article (attributed to Thomas Phillips, R.A.) which appeared in Rees' Encyclopædia (1819). The writer deals with his subject from what may be called the modern point of view, declaring that Romney's perception of art was far purer than that of most of his contemporaries, and that to attain grandeur and simplicity was the principal object of his ambition. While admitting that in consequence of his want of technical training, Romney's chiaroscuro was frequently ill-conducted, and his harmony of forms and colours imperfect, the critic proceeds, "To present his figure, or to tell his story, with simple, undisturbed effect was the point he aimed at and attained. He was, in general, fortunate in the choice of his historical subjects, and in this respect had the advantage of Sir Joshua, and no less so in the power of expression. . . . He aimed at the best of all principles in the imitation of Nature, namely, to generalise its effects; he even carried this so far as to subject himself to the charge of negligence in the completion of his forms; but the truth of his imitation is sufficiently perfect to satisfy the minds of those who regard Nature

systematically and not individually or too minutely."

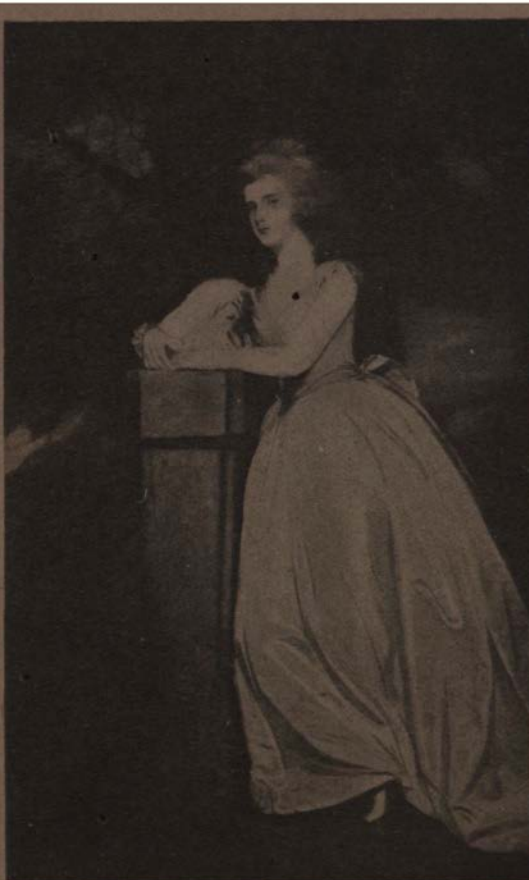
These brave words seem to have had little effect upon the public taste, judging from Croker's query in 1831, "What is a Ramsay or a Romney worth now?" Although some of the master's works appeared from time to time at the loan exhibitions of the British Institution, it was not until 1847 that the Vernon Bequest to the National Gallery revealed to the public the real quality of the artist whom it had so long neglected. From this time Romney's pictures appeared in greater numbers at the various loan exhibitions—there were twenty-one at the British Institution in 1863, and twenty at South Kensington in 1868—and attracted more attention from both experts and amateurs. The critics were, however, by no means unanimous as to the value of his productions. His "Newton displaying the Prism," which, according to an eighteenth-century admirer, was not surpassed for expression, colouring, and simplicity by the "Dead Christ" of Annibal Caracci, is described by Redgrave (writing in the early sixties) as poor in drawing, dirty and hot in colouring, and weak and commonplace in treatment. This mid-Victorian critic also observes that Romney

had little power of adding individuality to beauty, that his flesh was bricky, his forms unmodelled, and his work generally like that of a Correggio which has suffered at the hands of the cleaner. The destructive Redgrave is on firmer ground when he adds that while the painter was enthusiastic, energetic, and full of a certain nervous susceptibility that is akin to genius, his imagination being more active than his perseverance he was easily excited to begin, and easily tempted to lay aside his work.

The Romney revival proper may be said to have begun in 1890, when the "Sensibility" was sold by public auction for £3,045. At the Exhibition of Fair Women at the Grafton Gallery in 1894 the once despised painter was represented by twenty-one examples as against nineteen by his sometime rival, Sir Joshua, while the splendours of the Romney Exhibition at the same gallery in 1900–1 will be fresh within the memory of our readers. In 1896 his portrait of Lady Clifden and her sister, Lady Elizabeth Spencer, sold at Willis's Rooms for £10,500—the record price for a Romney, though it is said that £12,000 has been refused for the portrait of Lady Mansfield. With the twentieth century the master's popu-

larity shows no sign of waning. On June 14th, 1902, the portrait of Miss Sarah Rodbard (afterwards the wife of General Sir Eyre Coote) was sold at Christie's for £10,500, but—and this inequality is frequently to be observed in Romney prices—the portraits of the Cumberland sisters and of Lady Frances Benson only fetched seven hundred and ninety guineas and nine hundred guineas respectively. On July 7th, at the same rooms, the portrait-bust of Lady Morshead—measuring only twenty-nine inches by twenty-four, and already fading in colour—sold for £4,305.

Modern critical opinion, with regard to the quality of Romney's work, may be said to take a middle path between the extravagant applause of the eighteenth century and the contemptuous indifference of the early nineteenth century. He is no longer looked upon as a great historical painter *manqué;* on the contrary, connoisseurs are inclined to give thanks that his love of depicting pretty faces and his desire to realise a competence interfered with the execution of his ambitious schemes. It is, however, a matter for regret that in his time imaginative painting was almost synonymous with heroic painting. Romney's strength lay in works of graceful and poetic fancy, as



MISS RODBARD (LADY COOTE)

(By kind permission of Messrs. Thomas Agnew & Sons)

exemplified by the lovely studies, mostly unfinished, from the *Midsummer Night's Dream;* but he felt compelled to strain his invention, and still more his powers of execution, with subjects that might have staggered Michael Angelo.

In the present age, when the refinement of luxury has led to the casting away of much that is artificial and cumbersome in life and art, it is certain that the simplicity with which Romney's effects are achieved, is more keenly appreciated than it was in his own day. The distinction of his style is the natural outcome of his fastidious avoidance of the artificial and the meretricious rather than the result of elaborate environment or laboured dignity of pose. Another quality in Romney's work which appeals with irresistible force to the modern beauty-sense is his power of delineating—without a hint of suggestiveness—the seductive charm of girlish loveliness, just touched by the troubling mystery of sex. There is in his best portraits—notably the early ones of Emma Hart—an effect of "momentariness," which gives the impression that he has caught a fleeting smile, a sudden blush, a changing glance, and by the magic of his art has fixed upon canvas that one short hour of perfect blossoming which

stands between maturity and decay in the life of the human flower.

That Romney has the defects of his qualities must also be admitted. His beauties are women first and human beings afterwards, and there are few of whom it can be said, "It almost seemed as if her body thought." His portraits of middle-aged women are disappointing. He was too honest to idealise them, and he had not the Frenchman's power of representing the more subtle charms of character, or suggesting the piquancy of feminine experience. Romney has left several exquisite groups of children, notably the Stafford, and Clavering children, but his little people are too often treated merely as charming adjuncts to a decorative scheme, and are lacking in the individuality that marks Sir Joshua's children. When we turn to the masculine portraits we are reminded of Northcote's remark, "It is necessary to paint codgers, but they ought to be kept out of sight. Sir Joshua, of course, painted codgers, but he managed to make them agreeable some way or other." Romney was more successful with his bishops, politicians, and judges than with his middle-aged ladies; yet his portraits of "codgers" fetch low prices at the present day. A strong and

HENRIETTA, COUNTESS OF STAMFORD

characteristic countenance lost nothing at his hands, as may be seen by his presentments of such widely differing types as John Wesley, Dr. Parr, Lord Thurlow, and Thomas Paine, but he was only too faithful in his delineation of inanity. He did not deserve, as Hayley told him, the compliment paid by Dryden to Kneller :—

> "Thus thou sometimes art forced to draw a fool,
> But so his follies in thy posture sink,
> The senseless idiot seems at last to think."

It is impossible to forecast the position that Romney will occupy in the estimation of posterity. He is not one of those great masters whose place on Olympus is assured for all time. The inequality of his work, together with the variations of taste and fashion, have led, as has been seen, to strange vicissitudes in his reputation; but it is difficult to believe that a day will dawn again when the world will turn an indifferent eye upon those rosy incarnations of youth, those haunting dreams of beauty, which the very sound of Romney's name has now the power to conjure up—in a word, upon those complete revelations of his genius, wherein, as was said of a greater than he, "All labour and effort seem to cease in the radiant simplicity of consummated power."

CATALOGUE OF PICTURES PAINTED BY GEORGE ROMNEY[1]

Dr. Slop in Tristram Shandy's Parlour (engraved by Caroline Watson for Hayley's *Life of Romney*)	Painted at Kendal between 1757 and 1762
Death of Le Fevre	
Lear in the Tempest	
Lear awakened by Cordelia	
A Quarrel	
A Scene in an Ale-house	
Death of General Wolfe	1763
Samson and Delilah (unfinished)	1764
Death of King Edmund	1765
Two Sisters (engraved by R. Dunkarton)	1767
Mirth	1770
Melancholy	1770
Providence brooding over Chaos	1773-4
Cupid and Psyche	1777
Shipwreck and Rescue (engraved by Caroline Watson for Hayley's *Life*)	*c.* 1778
Serena (four studies for Hayley's *Triumphs of Temper*, one in the S. Kensington Museum)	1782
Absence	1785
L'Allegro and Il Penseroso (engraved by J. Jones)	1778

[1] Where dates are given these must be accepted as only approximately correct. In the many cases in which no dates are given, it was found impossible to discover the years in which the pictures were painted. Owing to Romney's refusal to exhibit at the Royal Academy, no official record was kept of his works later than 1771.

The Tempest (engraved by B. Smith for Boydell's Shakespeare; the head of Miranda engraved by C. Watson). Begun 1787; finished 1790

The Infant Shakespeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy (engraved by B. Smith for Boydell's Shakespeare) . . } . 1791-2

The Infant Shakespeare surrounded by the Passions (engraved by B. Smith for Boydell's Shakespeare) . . }

Milton dictating to his Daughters (engraved by B. Smith) 1792

Titania and the Indian Woman . . . 1793

Titania, the Changeling, and Puck (engraved by E. Scriven) . . . . .

Titania and Bottom . . . .

Newton displaying the Prism (engraved by — Meadows) 1794

FAMILY AND CONVERSATION PIECES

Peter and James Romney . . . 1766

Mr. and Mrs. Leigh and Five Children . . 1769

Sir George and Lady Warren and Child . . 1769

Major Pearson conversing with a Brahmin . 1771

The Five Children of Lord Gower (engraved by T. Appleton) . . . } Painted after the artist's return from Italy, between 1776 and 1781

Lord Stanley and his Sister (engraved by J. R. Smith) . . . .

George and Catherine Cornewall . .

Colonel Johnes and Friends . .

Thomas and Catherine Clavering (engraved by J. R. Smith) . .

Master and Miss Conway . .

The Children of Charles Boone . .

The Children of Captain Suttle . . }

The Children of Lord Elcho . . . 1786
The Children of Mr. Gosling . . . 1788
The Children of Mr. Adye . . . 1789
Mr. and Mrs. Drax Grosvenor and Child . . 1789
The Children of Mr. Fitzackly . . . 1792
The Four Friends (engraved for Hayley's *Memoirs*) 1795
Flaxman modelling the Bust of Hayley (in the National Portrait Gallery) . . . 1795
The Sons of Wilbraham Bootle . . .
The Sons of Sir G. Wilson . . .
Adam Walker and his Family (in the National Portrait Gallery) . . . .
Mr. and Mrs. Lindow (in the National Gallery) .
George Romney and his Father . . .

PORTRAITS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

A'Court, Mrs. . . . . .
Acton, Mrs. Lee . . . . .
Ainslie, Mrs., and Child 1787
Albemarle, Countess of, and Son Between 1776 and 1781
Anspach, Margravine of (two portraits, one in the possession of the Fishmongers' Company) . 1793
Austen, Lady . . . . .
Arden, Mrs., and Child 1788

Badcock, Mrs. (*née* Cumberland) . . .
Balgonie, Lady, and Child . . .
Bankes, Mrs. (engraved by J. Scott-Bridgwater) 1785
Bannister, Mrs. . . . .
Beauchamp, Lady . . . .
Beckford, The Misses 1789
Bentinck, Miss . . Between 1776 and 1781
Beresford, Mrs. and Miss . . . 1785
Bertie, Miss Emily 1781

Billington, Mrs. 1787
Blair, Mrs., and Child 1776–81
Blanchard, Mrs. . . . . .
Bonner, Mrs., and Child 1789
Bosanquet, Mrs., and Five Children . . 1795
Bracebridge, Mrs., and Child (engraved by J. R. Smith) . . . . .
Bradyll, Mrs. . . . . .
Brooke, Lady . . . . .
Browne, Mrs. . . . . .
Brownlow, Lady 1783
Broughton, Lady . . . . .
Buckley, Lady Georgiana . . . .

Calcraft, Miss . . . . . .
Cardiff, Lady Charlotte (engraved by F. Bartolozzi)
Carew, Mrs. . . . . .
Carlingford, Lady . . . . .
Carlisle, Countess of (engraved by J. Walker) .
Carpenter, Lady Almeria . . . .
Carwardine, Mrs., and Child (engraved by J. R. Smith) . . . . .
Chaplin, Mrs. . . . . .
Clanricarde, Countess of . . . . .
Clare, Lady . . . . . .
Clements, Mrs. . . . . .
Clifden, Lady, and Lady E. Spencer (engraved by H. Greenhead) . . . . .
Clifford, Lady de . . . . .
Clive, Lady . . . . . .
Cooke, Mrs. Davies (engraved by H. Greenhead)
Compton, Lady Elizabeth . . . 1776-81
Coppell, Mrs. . . . . .
Coote, Lady . . . . . .

Corbet, Mrs., and Child . . . 1776-81
Cosway, Mrs. . . . . .
Craven, Lady, afterwards Margravine of Anspach (two portraits, one in the National Gallery) .
Crespigny, Mrs. 1788
Crouch, Mrs. . . . . .
Cumberland, Mrs. 1770
Cumberland, Miss (afterwards Lady Edward Cavendish-Bentinck. Engraved by J. R. Smith)
Cumberland, the Misses . . . . .
Cumberland, H.R.H. the Duchess of . . 1788
Currie, Mrs. Mark (in the National Gallery; engraved by H. Greenhead) . . .

Damer, Hon. Mrs. . . . .
Dashwood, Mrs. 1776
Davenport, Mrs. (engraved by J. R. Smith) .
Davies, Mrs. . . . . .
Dawson, Mrs. (engraved by M. Cormack) .
Day, Miss . . . . .
Derby, Countess of (engraved by J. Dean) .
Douglas, Lady Susan . . . . .
Dundas, Lady Elizabeth . . . . .
Durham, Mrs. . . . . .
Durham, Miss . . . . . .

Eden, Lady . . . . . .
Egremont, Countess of, and Children . . 1795
Estwicke, Miss . . . . . .

Fitzgerald, Lady E. ("Pamela") . . .
Fitzherbert, Mrs. 1789
Forbes, Lady . . . . . .
Forbes, Miss . . . . . .

Ford, Mrs., and Child 1785
Fortesque, Countess, and her Sister . .
Foster, Lady Elizabeth . . . .
Fothergill, Mrs. 1791

Genlis, Madame de 1792
Gladwin, Mrs. . . . . .
Glencairn, Countess of (engraved by W. Walker)
Gordon, Duchess of, and Son . . 1777-81
Graham, Lady . . . . .
Grenville, The Misses . . . 1777-81
Griffiths, Mrs. . . . . .
Grove, Mrs. . . . . .

Hamilton, Lady, as—
Emma, Lady Hamilton (several; one in the National Portrait Gallery) . . .
"Emma" (engraved by J. Jones) . .
A Bacchante (a number of studies; among the most famous is the Bacchante leading a goat, painted in 1785, and engraved by C. Knight) 1785-6
Nature (engraved by J. R. Smith) . . 1782
Circe (engraved by J. Scott-Bridgwater) . 1782
Cassandra (engraved by F. Legat for Boydell's Shakespeare, and the head by Caroline Watson for Hayley's *Life*) . . 1791
Euphrosyne (engraved by C. S. Shury) .
St. Cecilia (engraved by J. Keating and by R. Earlom) . . . .
Lady Macbeth . . . . .
The Spinstress (engraved by T. Cheeseman)
The Seamstress (engraved by T. Cheeseman. Miss Lucy Vernon is believed by some authorities to have sat for this picture) .

Hamilton, Lady, as—
Sensibility (engraved by R. Earlom, and the head by Caroline Watson for Hayley's *Life*) 1782
Joan of Arc 1791
Contemplation . . . . .
Reading a Paper . . . . .
Diana . . . . . .
Wearing a Miniature (engraved by Meyer) . 1791
Ariadne (engraved by C. Browne) . .
Alope (engraved by R. Earlom) . .
Iphigenia . . . . . .
Calypso 1791
Magdalen 1791
A Pythian Priestess 1791
Lady Macbeth . . . . .
And many other studies
Hamilton, Lady Isabella (engraved by J. Walker)
Hamilton, Mrs. . . . . .
Hanmer, Lady Margaret . . .
Hanmer, Lady . . . . . .
Harford, Miss . . . . . .
Harris, Lady . . . . . .
Hartley, Mrs., and Child . . 1776 81
Hawkins, Mrs., and Children . . 1776 81
Haythorne, Mrs. . . . . .
Heron, Mrs. . . . . .
Hertford, Marchioness of (*née* Maria Fagniani) .
Hill, The Misses . . . 1776–81
Hodges, Mrs. . . . . .
Horsley, Mrs., and Children . . . 1789
Horsley, Miss 1793
Horton, Lady . . . . . .

Inchbald, Mrs. 1786

Jordan, Mrs., as the Romp (engraved by Bartolozzi)
Jordan, Mrs. (engraved by J. Ogborne) . .
Jouenne, Susan, Miss . . . .
Kent, The Misses 1783
Kenyon, Lady . . . . .
Ker, Mrs. (in the Edinburgh National Gallery) .
Knight, Mrs. . . . . .
Lemon, Lady . . . .
Legge, Lady Charlotte (engraved by J. Grozer)
Linley, Miss . . . . .
Lloyd, Mrs. . . . . .
Lockwood, Miss . . . .
Love, Miss . . . . .
Lowther, Mrs. 1790
Lucan, Countess of . . . .
Lutwyche, Mrs. . . . .
Marlborough, Duchess of (engraved by J. Jones)
Marshall, Mrs. Chitty . . . .
Martindale, Miss (engraved by R. Josey) . .
Marwood, Mrs. . . . .
Musters, Mrs. (engraved by J. Walker) . .
Mee, Mrs. . . . . .
Mellon, Harriet . . . . .
Miller, Mrs. . . . . .
Milner, Lady (engraved by W. Henderson) .
Milnes, Lady . . . . .
Molony, Mrs. 1780
Montgomery, Mrs. . . . .
Moody, Mrs. . . . . .
Morris, Mrs., and Child . . 1877–81
Morshead, Lady . . . .
Mountstuart, Lady (engraved by Bartolozzi) .
Murray, Lady Augusta . . . 1782

North, Hon. Mrs. (engraved by J. R. Smith) .

Pamela, afterwards Lady Edward Fitzgerald, (two studies) 1792
Parr, Miss Ann (engraved by J. Dean) . .
Parry, Miss Ann (engraved by J. Dean) . .
Parson's Daughter, The (in the National Gallery)
Paulett, Lady Katherine . . . . .
Peirse, Miss . . . . . .
Pitt, Miss Ann . . . . . .
Pitt, Mrs. Morton, and Child . . . 1791
Porteous, Mrs. . . . . .
Powell, Miss . . . . . .
Powlett, Lady . . . . . .
Powys, Mrs. Jelf . . . . .
Price, Lady Caroline . . . . .
Purling, Miss 1778

Raikes, Mrs., and Child 1785
Ramus, Miss (engraved by W. Dickenson) .
Ramus, Miss Benedetta (Lady Day. Engraved by W. Dickenson) . . . .
Rattray, Mrs. . . . . .
Regis, Miss . . . . . .
Robertson, Mrs. . . . . .
Robinson, Mrs. ("Perdita." Engraved by J. R. Smith. At Hertford House) . . .
Rouse, Mrs. Boughton 1785
Russell, Lady, and Son 1784
Rutland, Duchess of . . . .

St. George, Mrs., and Child . . . 1791
Seward, Miss (engraved by W. Ridley) . . 1788
Shakespeare, Miss 1785
Siddons, Mrs. . . . . .

Smith, Charlotte 1792
Smith, Mrs. Carmichael . . . .
Smith, Mrs. Drummond 1783
Smith, Lady Georgiana . . . .
Smith, Miss Juliet . . . .
Spencer, The Ladies 1786
Stables, Mrs., and Children (engraved by J. R. Smith) 1776–81
Stamford, Countess of (engraved by J. R. Keating)
Stormont, Lady (afterwards Countess Mansfield. Engraved by J. R. Smith) . . .
Strickland, Mrs. . . . . *c.* 1760
Sullivan, Lady . . . . .
Sutherland, Countess of 1782

Thornhill, Mrs. . . . . .
Thurlow, The Misses 1783
Tickell, Mrs. . . . . .
Tighe, Mrs. . . . . .
Tighe, Miss . . . . .
Townshend, Marchioness of . . . *c.* 1790
Trench, Mrs. (in the National Gallery) . .
Trotter, Mrs. . . . . .

Vandergucht, Miss . . . . .
Verelst, Mrs. . . . . .
Verelst, Miss . . . . .
Vernon, Miss Lucy . . . .

Wallace, Miss 1788
Wallis, Miss . . . . .
Ward, Mrs. Towneley . . . .
Warren, Mrs. . . . . .
Warwick, Countess of (engraved by J. R. Smith)
Warwick, Countess of, with Children 1776–81

Wedderburn, Lady 1771
West, Lady Georgiana . . . .
Whateley, Mrs. . . . .
Whatman, Mrs. . . . . *c.* 1780
Wilson, Mrs. Daniel . . . . *c.* 1760
Wright, Lady . . . .

Yates, Mrs.. as Melpomene (eng. by V. Walker) *c.* 1771

PORTRAITS OF MEN AND BOYS

Acton, Nathaniel Lee . . . .
Adair, James, Recorder of London (engraved by C. H. Hodges) . . . .
Allen, Joseph, Master of Dulwich College (engraved by C. Towneley) . . .
Anspach, Margrave of 1793

Bateman, Dr. . . . . *c.* 1760
Beckford, Alderman (from a cast) . . . 1794
Bentinck, Captain . . . .
Berwick, Lord . . . . .
Bolton, Lord . . . . .
Braddyll, Colonel . . . .
Brandt, Joseph, Mohawk Chief (engraved by J. R. Smith) . . . . .
Brownlow, Lord (engraved by L. Schiavonetti) .
Burges, George (engraved by J. Jones) . .
Burgoyne, Sir J. . . . .
Burke, Edmund (engraved by J. Jones)
In 1770 and in 1785
Camelford, Lord . . . .
Campbell, Sir Archibald . . . .
Cardiff, Lord (engraved by Bartolozzi) . .
Cardigan, Earl of (engraved by J. Grozer) .

Carlisle, Earl of (engraved by T. Holloway)
Carwardine, Rev. Thomas
Cathcart, C. A. (engraved by W. Sharpe)
Cavendish, Lord John 1776
Chafyn-Grove, William
Chamberlaine, Edward (engraved by J. Jacobé)
Chatham, Lord 1783
Cleaver, Euseby, Bishop of Cork
Cotton, Henry
Cowper, William 1792
Cumberland, Richard (two portraits, one in the National Portrait Gallery. Engraved by V. Green)

Darwin, Erasmus
Dawes, John
Delawarr, Lord
Derby, Earl of 1783
Duff, Colonel (engraved by C. Hodges)
Dundas, Right Hon. Henry (engraved by J. Young)
Dundas, Major-General
Dunlop, of Carmyle

Egremont, Earl of
Euston, Lord 1794

Farmer, Dr. (engraved by J. Jones) 1784
Feversham, Lord
Flaxman, John
Forbe, Sir F.
Forbes, Captain
Forbes, Hon. John (engraved by E. Townley)
Fowler, Robert, Archbishop of Dublin

Garrow, David (engraved by C. Hodges)
Germaine, Lord George (engraved by J. Jacobé)

Gibbon, Edward 1783
Gloucester, H.R.H. The Duke of (engraved by J. Jones) . . . . .
Gowan, Lord . . . . .
Gower, Earl . . . . .
Graham, Sir Bellingham . . . . .
Grantham, Lord (engraved by W. Dickenson) .
Greville, Hon. Charles (engraved by H. Meyer) 1782
Grey, Lord . . . . .
Grey, Sir Harry . . . . .
Griffiths, R. . . . . .
Grove, Thomas . . . . .

Hardy, Sir C. (engraved by Dickenson) . .
Hamilton, Sir William . . . . .
Harris, James (in National Portrait Gallery. Engraved by Bartolozzi) . . .
Harrowby, Lord . . . . .
Hartley, David (engraved by J. Walker) . .
Hastings, Warren 1795
Hayley, Thomas, as Puck . . . 1789
Hayley, William (several portraits. Engraved by J. Jacobé and C. Watson) . . .
Henderson, The Actor, as Macbeth (engraved by J. Jones) . . . . .
Henniker, John (engraved by A. Hudson) .
Hodgson, F. M. . . . . .
Hughes, Sir Edward . . . . .
Humphrey, Ozias (engraved by V. Green and C. Watson) . . . . .

Irwin, Edward (engraved by W. Walker). .
Irwin, Eyles (engraved by W. Walker) . .

Jebb, Sir Richard . . . . c. 1777

Kenyon, Lord
Keppel, Admiral, The Hon. Augustus (engraved by Dickenson) 1776
Knight, Thomas

Law, Edmund, Bishop of Chester (engraved by Dickenson) 1786
Lemon, Sir W.
Liverpool, Earl of (engraved by J. Murphy)
Long, William
Lushington, Sir H., as a Boy 1776

Macpherson, James
Manby, Master, with a Dog
Markham, William, Archbishop of York (engraved by J. Ward) 1789
Marlborough, Duke of (engraved by J. Jones)
Martin, James
Maude, Captain
Mawby, Sir J.
Middleton, Lord
Milner, Sir J.
Mingay, James, Recorder of London (engraved by J. Hodges)
Montagu, Edward Wortley 1776
Moore, John, Archbishop of Canterbury (engraved by J. Jones) 1788
Morland, Jacob *c.* 1760
Mountstuart, Lord (engraved by Bartolozzi)

Nevinson, Edward
Newland, Abraham (for the Bank of England) 1794

Ogilvie, Captain
Orde, Right Hon. Thoma (engraved by J. Jones)

Paine, John . . . . . .
Paine, Thomas . . . . . .
Payne, Master 1776
Paley, Dr. (engraved by J. Jones) . . . 1789
Palmer, Robert . . . . . .
Parker, Sir Hyde (engraved by J. Walker) .
Parr, Dr. (engraved by J. Jones) . . . 1788
Petre, Lord . . . . . .
Pitt, Right Hon. William (engraved by J. Jones) 1783
Porteous, Beilby, Bishop of London . . 1781
Portland, Duke of 1794
Potter, Dr. 1779
Prescott, Sir G. . . . . .
Purling, George . . . . c. 1778
Pusey, Philip . . . . . .

Raikes, Thomas (engraved by C. Hodges) .
Reed, Isaac (engraved by W. Dickenson) . 1795
Richmond, Duke of (engraved by J. Watson)
In 1776 and in 1795
Romney, George (several; one in the National Portrait Gallery. Engraved by T. Wright and C. Watson) . . . . .
Romney, James . . . . .
Romney, John . . . . . .
Russell, Sir Henry . . . . .

Scott, David (engraved by J. Young) . .
Sheridan, Charles . . . . .
Sheridan, R. B. . . . . .
Shore-Milnes, Sir R. . . . . .
Shute, Barrington, Bishop of Salisbury (engraved by J. Jones) . . . . .
Stamford, Earl of (engraved by Keating) .

Stone, Richard .
Stormont, Lord .
Strickland, Charles
Strickland, Walter
Strickland, Rev. William . . c. 1758
Stuart, General Charles (engraved by T. Grozer)
Stuart, General James (engraved by C. Hodges)
Tayadaneega, Mohawk Chief (engraved by J. R. Smith)
Tempest, Master (engraved by J. Walker)
Thornhill, Master (engraved by J. Scott)
Thornton, Mr. . 1776
Thurlow, Lord . 1781
Thyer, Robert (engraved by Worthington)
Todd, Anthony (engraved by J. Jones)
Townshend, Marquis
Walker, Thomas (engraved by W. Sharp)
Wallace, Thomas . c. 1780
Wallop, Hon. Newton . 1791
Watson, Dr., Bishop of Llandaff (engraved by J. Jones) . 1787
Wesley, John (engraved by J. Spilsbury) . 1788
Westmorland, Earl of (engraved by J. Jones) In 1789 and in 1795
Williams, Captain . 1782
Wilson, Dr., Bishop of Bristol
Wilson, Sir John
Wilson, Colonel
Yates, Sir Joseph . 1764

PICTORIAL DESIGNS AND STUDIES BY GEORGE ROMNEY

(Presented to the University of Cambridge in 1817 by the Rev. John Romney.)

Two sketches of a Nude Female caressing a Child, perhaps intended for Alope.
Venus and Adonis.
Two studies of Jupiter.
King Lear Asleep.
King Lear Awake.
Ceyx and Alcyone.
Four variations of Medea.
The Destruction of Niobe's Children.
Two designs of the Cumæan Sibyl.
Electra and Orestes at the Tomb of Agamemnon.
Two sketches of the interior of St. Peter's at Rome.
Three sketches from the *Iliad* of Thetis supplicating Jupiter and comforting Achilles.
Una.
A Woman caressing a Dog.
Hebe.
Psyche.
Pensierosa.
A Mother instructing a Child.
A Mother flying with her Child upon the Ramparts of a City in Flames.
Celadon and Amelia, from *The Seasons.*
Damon and Musidora, from *The Seasons.*
The Damsel from the ballad "When the seas were roaring."
A Sibyl.

Three sketches of the Lapland Witch.
Three sketches from the Fable of Cupid and Psyche.
The Infancy of Shakespeare.
Nature unveiling herself to the Infant Shakespeare.
The Dying Mother.
Lear and Cordelia.
Homer reciting his Verses.
David and Saul.
Four studies designed for an altar-piece for King's College Chapel.
Macbeth and Banquo.
The Weird Sisters.
The Head of Edgar.
Venus.
Study from Gray's *Descent of Odin*.
From the ballad "'Twas when the seas were roaring."
A design supposed to be inspired by the "And darkness was upon the face of the deep."
Two sketches of a Mother and Child.
Two studies of Nude Children.
Eleven designs for a picture (unfinished) of "A Group of Bacchantes assisting at the Initiation of a Rustic Nymph."
Two sketches representing "Fortune-telling.
The Ghost of Clytemnestra.
Three sketches representing Euridice vanishing from Orpheus.
Harpalice, a Thracian Princess, defending her wounded Father.
Paris dying, lamented by Mountain Nymphs.
Two studies of a group of children adrift in a boat, and their nurse on shore.
Two studies for the Spinstress and Alope.

Hume, in a Domestic Scene.
A Dream.
A sketch of a young girl grieving over a fawn which has been killed by lightning.
Three designs from the pastoral romance of Longus.
Eight sketches for Hayley's *Essay on Old Maids.*
Two sketches suggested by a modern story of a servant girl hanged for an offence of which she was innocent, and restored to life by a surgeon.
Gil Morrice, from Percy's *Reliques.*
Three designs from Statius' *Thebaid.*
The Grecian Daughters.
Two Girls chasing a Butterfly.
Two studies from Nature.
A Veteran Soldier endeavouring to persuade a Youth to exchange Love for Military Glory.
A Mother and Daughters.
Three sketches on the subject of Magic.
Seven studies for the picture of "The Tempest."
Three sketches of Falstaff.
Studies of Joan of Arc and the Fiends.
Sketches from *Macbeth.*
Four sketches of Titania and her Fairies.
Nine studies for projected pictures representing the scenes witnessed by Howard in the Lazzarettos and prisons abroad.
Four sketches from Milton; the last that Romney made.

EIGHTEEN CARTOONS DESIGNED BY GEORGE ROMNEY

(Presented to the Liverpool Royal Institution in 1823 by the Rev. John Romney.)

Eight cartoons on the subject of Cupid and Psyche.
Two of Orpheus and Eurydice.
Prometheus Chained.
Descent of Odin.
Medea.
The Infant Shakespeare.
The Birth of Shakespeare.
The Death of Cordelia.
The Ghost of Darius.
Atossa's Dream.

BOOKS RELATING TO ROMNEY

Life of George Romney, by William Hayley.
Memoirs of George Romney, by the Rev. John Romney.
Romney and his Art, by Hilda Gamlin.
Romney and Gainsborough, by Lord Ronald Gower.
Illustrated Catalogue of Engravings after Pictures by Gainsborough and Romney, by H. P. Horne.

Articles on Romney appear in—

Pilkington's *Dictionary of Painters* (Fuseli's edition).
Rees' *Encyclopædia.*
Allan Cunningnam's *Lives of the Painters*
Redgrave's *Century of British Artists.*
Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers.*
The Dictionary of National Biography.

References to Romney occur in—

The Autobiography of Richard Cumberland.
The Observer, by Richard Cumberland.
Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson, by J. C. Jeaffreson.
Lady Hamilton, by Hilda Gamlin.
Memoirs of Lady Hamilton, edited by Long.
Memoirs of William Hayley.
Life of William Cowper, by Hayley.
Life of W. Cowper, by Southey.
Life of W. Cowper, by T. Wright.
Cowper's *Letters.*
Miss Seward's *Correspondence.*
Life of Sir J. Reynolds, by Northcote.
Northcote's *Conversations with Hazlitt.*
Northcote's *Conversations with Ward.*
Nollekens and his Times, by J. T. Smith.
Pettigrew's *Life of Nelson.*
Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*
Horace Walpole's *Correspondence.*
Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay.

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